

SERMONS
FOR LAY READERS
IN
THE AMERICAN CHURCH

BISHOP OF MARQUETTE



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Human questions and divine
answers

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

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THE
HUMAN QUESTIONS
AND
DIVINE ANSWERS

Short Sermons Expressly
Written for Lay Readers
in the American Church

BY

GERSHOM MOTT WILLIAMS
Bishop of Marquette



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TO
THE MOST REVEREND
DANIEL SYLVESTER TUTTLE, D.D., LL.D.
PRESIDING BISHOP,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

For many years the writer of these Sermons has been obliged to call upon laymen to read occasional services in small mission churches. In order to supply them with sermons to select from, he has bought books by many writers. There are a great many books of excellent sermons, but most of them are not exactly what is wanted for lay reading. They are either too long, though not too long when the author delivered them; or the note is too personal, though that might also have been a merit when they were first preached; or they are too elaborate and learned, making too great demands upon the audience to follow them; or they may be too English; that is, all the illustrations and allusions are taken from English life.

Now such sermons may be useful in the hands of persons competent to adapt them to the particular needs of a small American congregation. But so few of my lay-readers have had this power of adaptation, that I have been forced to write many short sermons for them.

What I have kept in mind has been: as much brevity as was consistent with a certain air of completeness, simple language, clear statement, short paragraphs and short sentences, so that the reader would not be apt to make a mistake in the sense. Then I have sought a certain obviousness. A lay-reader can hardly

do justice to a sermon unless he can believe it to be true, and adopt it as a statement of his own views. Then I have purposely avoided the personal touch, and let facts and illustrations speak for themselves. And I have felt that the lay-reader's work ought never to be put in the place of the clergyman's; it is purely supplementary, so there is here no note of authority, nor is there any controversy. Nevertheless, all the sermons touch on personal religion, and keep close to the Church's way, and it is my hope and prayer that they may be of help in the forward work of the Church.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

I.—COME AND SEE.

Where dwellest Thou?—St. John 1:38.



HE place where John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing when Christ was ready to begin His ministry was a spot across Jordan, near by the southeast corner of Galilee. It is hard to realize now that the country where so much of the Gospel story was acted out was so small. But a strong man could have walked in a day from Nazareth, or Cana, to Bethabara, which is believed to be the place of the baptism of Christ. The multitudes who went out to John were coming and going.

There was probably a village there where light entertainment could be had, but it is not probable that in that country and climate men who were naturally the visitors of the Baptist would make much of sleeping in the open. The narrative points to three days when our Lord was near Bethabara. There was the day which, if we had

no other account, would seem that of His baptism, and on the following day John pointed Him out to Andrew and his companion as "The Lamb of God," and the day after that was the return to Galilee, taking Cana, where the wedding occurred, on the way.

The question can hardly refer to the home of Christ, which had been, until then, at Nazareth, and was soon to be for some time at Capernaum; but to His temporary abiding place, perhaps a little booth or tent, perhaps an open camp. At all events, wherever it was, when Andrew and his companion asked, "Where dwellest Thou?" or better, "Where abidest Thou?" our Lord answered, "Come and see." So they followed Him, remained with Him all night, and the next day went back with Him toward Cana.

This reckoning does not quite fit in with the story of the Temptation of Christ, which the other Gospels place after the Baptism, and before the public ministry. So it is more possible that the first day mentioned in the account by St. John is the first day after the return from the wilderness, our Lord's immediate departure after His baptism having given the Baptist no opportunity to make a testimony to Him. Andrew and the other, Simon Peter and Philip, were all disciples of John, and all from the same town. The unnamed

disciple was probably St. John the Evangelist. It is notable that St. John does not say that our Lord was baptized on that first day, but only that John saw Jesus coming to him.

Most of us know very little of the sort of life in the open in which the acquaintance of the disciples with their Lord began. It is a very intimate life; acquaintance ripens rapidly. It reveals our Lord as extraordinarily accessible, ready to share anything with those who seriously came to Him. In the after days of His ministry He not only welcomed people, even in the wilderness, but He is not recorded as refusing entertainment from anyone offering it, and yet some of the entertainment was far from agreeable. But it all gave Him an opportunity, and it gave His hosts a further opportunity, to hear something that might change the current of their lives.

Hospitality was easier then than it now is in this land where living has become so complicated. In the nature of things one would suppose that the more we have to entertain with, the easier it would be to entertain; whereas, in fact, the more we have, the harder it is finding guests to fit into the elaborate surroundings of modern housekeeping. Hospitality is a virtue that is actually slipping away from us. When angels came to Abraham he took them in as a matter of course. But we would

probably advise them to go to a hotel. Fortunately, this virtue lingers in the rural part of our land, and on the ranges where there are no hotels, and it is there still realized that "a man's life consisteth not in the multitude of things that he possessth."

The house that never has a guest becomes the home of routine, rather than of humanity. The guest is usually not wanted because he would break into the routine, and so such a house becomes a temple of selfishness. It does us actual good to have to change our arrangements, and do a little camping in our own homes, that we may shelter strangers and friends.

For, think a little. If Christ should come, would you think it possible to entertain Him? He certainly would come to you if you asked Him, and bring into your house the real touch of home. But if you thought it possible to entertain Him, our modern customs would drive you almost irresistibly to serve Him in Martha's spirit rather than in Mary's: to try to fit Him to your ways, instead of fitting yourselves to Him.

We can get our Lord's idea of home and a welcome, from various things He says in the Gospels. Here is His widest invitation: "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*." When He sent His disciples to

evangelize Galilee and Judea, He told them to go two and two, and when they came to a house to say at the door, "Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell therein." So a home ought to be a place of *peace*, as well as of rest. A house ought not to be "divided against itself."

It ought to be full of the acts of simple *charity*. He speaks of the welcoming kiss, of refreshing water to drink and to cool the feet, of eating "such things as are set before you," and so of quiet *contentment* with plain living.

It would be a house with much *prayer*, or our Saviour would have to leave it for a place to pray. Religion would begin with early childhood, for Christ took little children up into His arms, and blessed them. He would bring Divine healing and comfort if there were sick or mourners; He would rejoice to be with us.

Our Saviour speaks of so many of the details of housekeeping that it ought not to be hard to think of Him as interested in all the things we have to do; the lighting the candle, sweeping the house, leavening the meal, grinding with the hand-mill. Life was simple then; let us try to keep it such as He could approve.

Let us try to enter into our Lord's love for life in the open. He was at home there. "Consider the lilies of the field." The wild flowers can help

us to Christ. Remember the great feast He spread on the green grass. He spoke of the sparrows, the ravens, the eagles, the mothering, brooding hen. He loved the sheep, the shade of the olive trees, the high hills.

And then let us try to draw as near as we can to Him in the home of the sanctuary, bringing into it with our own hands all fair things to show our love for Him, and to remind us of His love for us, since all are His gifts. Bring the flowers that He loved, the songs that He approved, the light that symbolizes Him. Think of all His homes. He inhabiteth eternity. He sitteth above the water flood. He is in His Holy Temple. Yet He dwelleth with the humble, the contrite, and the lowly; He makes His home in the purified heart. The door of His house is always open; let us open to Him the doors of our heart.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

II.—NATHANAEL'S QUESTION.

Whence knowest Thou me?—St. John 1:48.



ERY little is known about Nathanael; even his identification with Bartholomew adds practically nothing to our knowledge. And aside from that identification, and some traditions, of whose trustworthiness we really cannot pronounce anything, we have just two mentions in the Gospel of St. John. One is in the immediate context we have chosen to consider, and the other is a mention in the last chapter of the Gospel, which tells us that his home was in Cana of Galilee. Cana was not very far from Nazareth, and its people had evidently a very poor opinion of Nazareth. This was so true that Nathanael at once found it difficult to accept any one from such a place and claiming to be the Messiah. But he had an open mind, and was willing to investigate.

Coming to our Lord he is met by a testimony

to his character which is one of the most remarkable ever uttered by our Master. We recall no other like it. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." That is, Nathanael's character was free from all that made the character of the real Israel so unlovely at first. Jacob made his way at first by guile, deceit. He deceived Isaac, he bargained with Esau, he was too sharp for Laban. Of course he met with just about what he dealt in, and, fortunately for him, became at last a changed man.

Nathanael began his association with our Lord with none of these unlovely traits to get rid of. He had no guile, and he must have been therefore a lovely character, full of a knowledge of the Scriptures, that encouraged our Lord to speak to him words which would have been mysterious to anyone who had not thought deeply about Jacob's life and call. Christ there reveals to Nathanael that the Incarnation is the true Ladder of approach to God, the true source of the ministry of angels. It was when our Lord had described him as guileless, a saying of which Nathanael apparently heard just enough to be sure that our Lord claimed to know him, that the man enquired, "Whence knowest Thou me?"

Our Lord's response was something that no one but Nathanael himself could appreciate.

"Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathanael had evidently been quite alone when he was under the fig tree, and it has been conjectured that he was engaged in devotion; for he recognizes at once the wonderful character of Christ's knowledge of him, and confesses His Messiahship without further delay.

A great deal has been written and enquired about the limitations of Christ's knowledge while He was here on earth. That there was some limitation He Himself admitted, but there were signs enough to mark His knowledge as super-human, especially in His discernment of character. This was not confined to any knowledge specially born of sympathy with kindred souls. He knew sinners as well as He knew saints, and He knew the inmost recesses of being. He knew Simon Peter much better than that impulsive character knew himself; and as to Nathanael, He doubtless surprised him very much by His characterization.

It is, however, our Lord's claim to have knowledge of a man's most private moments which is the subject we ought most to look at here. His answer to Nathanael is the same as if He spoke to us. You, too, said your prayers to-day. You may have said them faithfully, thoughtfully, humbly, spiritually, reverently, earnestly, just

as prayers ought to be said for a blessing to follow. Or it may have been formal prayer, perfunctory, with wandering mind, forgetful half way through whether you had begun right and were proceeding in the usual way.

The point is this: whether you were attending or not, it is certain that Christ was. He sees, He knows, He realizes. "All things are naked and open before Him with whom we have to do." And this does not merely apply to prayer, because we have merely guessed that Nathanael was praying. It applies to everything else. It applies to all our needs, small or great. Cana was a little town, Nathanael was not a widely known man; a fig tree is a common tree, but not a big tree. Nathanael's affairs were probably no more important than yours or mine, and mine are of no great consequence to anyone but myself.

But Christ knew, and, further, He knew in the best kind of way. It was interested knowledge. He appreciated the man, and all he was, and all he thought. He knew his difficulties and limitations; that he could not help his limitations, but that he had no guile. And so He went the right way to work to bring to this good man the chance to be better, the chance to dedicate his sincerity, his honesty, his spiritual perception to the right Master.

Could the Master say as much of you or me as He did of Nathanael? No guile? Go back over your life, and test it by Jacob's. You have had a father and mother. You have had, perhaps, brothers, uncles; perhaps you have dealt with your family in a business way, perhaps only with others. We don't get much justice in family dealings generally. Partiality, jealousy, distrust are apt to blind us. "Blood is thicker than water," as the proverb says, but it isn't always cleaner than water. The main question is, though, Do you really think you are square, or would be square, in dealing with people as Jacob dealt with and battled with them by his wits? for he was otherwise not a fighting man.

Most men are conscious in an unwilling way of their own defects, but quite willing most of the time to forget them. And sometimes we do succeed for so long in forgetting them that we are shocked when we again discover the guile lurking hidden within us; what is picturesquely called "the yellow streak."

Now all the time Christ knows, and all the time Christ is either glad or sorry about us, and all the time anxious to make us true Israelites, purging away the guile, and bringing us into communion with Himself.

It will be recalled that when Nathanael asked,

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered, "Come and see." Nathanael was prejudiced, but he was unwilling to allow his prejudice to prevent him from giving every question fair consideration. He went to see. His going brought him faith. Now, supposing you have never fully yielded to the claims of Christ, have you ever given Him His chance to remove your prejudices? Whatever they are, they will be met and banished if Christ is given His opportunity. It does not seem to matter much what our prejudices are, as long as we can't help them and are honest. Thomas had not the least right to say, "I will not believe" except upon his own conditions, but our Lord knew that Thomas loved Him, and that he could not help his temperament; so He gave him exactly the proof that he asked for. So too He met Nathanael's difficulty with evidence which was all that could be asked. Only Nathanael had to be square, and Thomas had to be square, and give up when the proof came.

It is not uncommon to see men fight strongly against conviction, against Gospel assurance, as if to surrender would mean defeat. It is the most glorious kind of defeat. It ushers us into life. It brings us to our Heavenly Father.

Now Christ not only knows us, our character, and our need, but He knows all that we ought to

know. He has the Key of Knowledge, He has the fulfilment of character. To be fair to ourselves and Him is just to begin right. But we need long discipleship before we are complete. Good man as Nathanael was, his goodness had to be developed, applied, consecrated, completed, and he himself made absolutely the servant of God, the faithful apostle. No present belief of ours that we are innocent of this or that fault ought to content us, until we have put ourselves wholly in the Saviour's guidance. He sees us, but He wants us all to be worthy to see Him, to see the full meaning, blessing and salvation of the Incarnation; "to see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

III.—THE HOSTILE JEWS.

What sign shovest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?—St. John 2:18.



HIS question is the first note of opposition encountered by our Lord in His public ministry, and it was an opposition that never wavered until it had killed Him. The temple in Jerusalem, Herod's temple so called, was wonderful and glorious. There was no break in the round of its services, and it was thronged with worshippers.

But there was a business side to it, and the chiefs in authority had an eye to this business side, and profited greatly by it. They allowed small hawkers to invade the temple courts to sell there the doves for the sacrifices, and even the sellers of the larger sacrificial animals, sheep and oxen; and they allowed the money-changers to set up their tables, so that foreign money could be changed for the legal coinage of the sanctuary.

Of course there was a profit on all this, and if we look ahead at our Lord's words at the second cleansing of the temple, we see that the profit was not always honest. But our Lord says nothing of that at this time. He simply expressed the offense of turning the Temple of God, God's house, into a house of merchandise, a shop.

It is noticeable that, though our Lord had no other weapon than "a whip of small cords," He had no real resistance from anyone of these intruders. He was entirely successful for the moment in getting rid of them, so that they must have known that they had no business there. "'Tis conscience makes cowards of us all." The opposition came from the Jews, probably from the official class, those really responsible, and this made its importance. When they asked the Lord for a sign, they had not yet fully determined to reject Him, for they still thought they might find His ministry useful to their plans.

But our Lord's answer was of a sort that would have been useless to anyone with their unspiritual views. His answer was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And the Evangelist's comment is, "He spake of the Temple of His Body." The words spoken were remembered by the Jews as if they were an attack on the temple. This thought was still in their minds when

Stephen was tried, for the witnesses then said, "We have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us." Truth cannot come into a hostile mind; it hears things warped and distorted.

The Jews answered our Lord, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days?" This exclamation our Lord did not answer. No answer could have been given; though doubtless He would have told them all they could have understood. This was His method. He never denied explanation to those who were entitled to know because able to understand.

Our Lord's answer to the request for signs was, hence, different in different cases. To these Jews it was an enigmatic answer. But to John's disciples, asking religiously, asking by authority of John himself, who nevertheless sent to enquire, we may believe, more on their account than on his own, our Lord gave the signs which would be plain to a student of prophecy, to a spiritually minded man able to read "the signs of the times." "Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

The order of these signs is remarkable. In every rhetorical judgment of good writing, it would be taken that the last of them was considered by our Lord as the most important. That the poor should find a helper and sympathizer, that the Kingdom should be preached to them brought in a marvel of marvels, a change affecting, not this or that dead man, but the whole world of men and ideas. It was the moral miracle that was the most important, and in that sense, at least, there is no reason why we should think that miracles have ceased.

The miracle to which Christ mysteriously referred in His answer to the Jews, the miracle of the Resurrection, is considered the central fact of the Gospel. "If Christ be not raised, then is our preaching in vain. Your faith is also vain." It was sufficient for thousands at the first preaching of it; it has sufficed for all true Christians since. But it did not satisfy many of those who must have had just as much evidence of it as those who did believe. It did not convert some who were at pains to invent a lie to explain it away. Truly, faith is greater than knowledge, and the knowledge of a sacred fact cannot save us from our sins, if we cling to our sin by choice.

The evidence of Christianity does not get less as time goes on. The sifting of documents has

now gone its fullest possible length, and we have all sorts of expert testimony to the genuineness of our records. The beauty of the Christ, the perfection of His life continues unique. The ages of enlightenment have brought nothing forward to supersede it. Modern science heaps up detailed illustrations of the sacred facts, of their credibility, of the truth and strength and importance of the unseen.

But none of the testimony is of any value to a heart which does not wish to believe, to a mind intent to have things its own way. Those who seem to find the difficulties of faith too strong ought to examine into their hearts for the source of their preconceptions. Why is faith easy for me, and hard, perhaps, for another? Have I perhaps less intelligence, or has he? Is not humility the necessary approach to the study of any subject? And may not some pride of opinion be destructive of any possibility of really learning? Illustrations of this could be found in the history of science as well as religion.

Or, it would be perhaps useful for the man who is hesitating to look around at his companions. The honest doubter must shudder oftentimes when he finds himself in the ranks of the opponents of Christ. For these opposers include and marshal hostilely against the Master the proud, the envious,

the covetous, the violent, the unclean, the cruel, the wilfully ignorant. No one denies that there are honest doubters. But they certainly cannot doubt that Christ came to advance "whatsoever things are true, pure, lovely and of good report," and that, allowing for all the evil in the Church, it continues to be "the blessed company of all faithful people," the "Communion of Saints."

What is shown in the text in conflict with Christ is described by its modern name of "graft." Graft creeps in everywhere. It would rule the Church if it could, as well as the legislatures and society. It does not believe in virtue when it sees it, or that the good is the holy. It not only disbelieves in virtue, but it hates it. The Jews hated Christ, and disbelieved in Him chiefly because they hated Him. His principles rendered the supremacy of formalists, or worldlings, impossible. The behavior of such people is governed, not by right, but by expediency. "It is *expedient* that one man shall die for the people," or else "the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation." We shall lose our advantages.

It would seem to me, considering all Christianity has been able to do for the world through such faithfulness to her Master's teaching as she has been able to arise to, that any thoughtful man, who may yet have some lingering doubts of dog-

matic details in Christianity, must feel that he would rather die with Christ than live with the opponents of the Cross.

And there is this last best thing in the matter of evidence: that no one who has ever made the great surrender, and tried Christ for His Friend and Leader, has ever been disappointed. The answers cease to be enigmatic and dark when we get into His fellowship. We get to know of the doctrine, because we prove God's will in daily life. We know answers to religious questions in the long run just as we know them to our other problems. When the answer is right it just fits in. Just as food is food because it does the work of food, so Christ is Christ because He is the Bread of Life. He is the Answer, the Satisfaction of the heart. And there has never been any other. Every one knows perfectly well that it isn't a question of Christ or Buddha, of Christ or Plato, of Christ or Mahomet—it is Christ or nobody. And that there should be no answer to the heart in a rational world is just simply unthinkable.

Let us then seek Christ in a purified temple with purified lives. It will lead us on not only to know that He is raised, but to have the power of His resurrection in ourselves.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

IV.—NICODEMUS' QUESTION.

How can these things be?—St. John 3: 9.



HIS was the question of a thoughtful man who was interested in truth, and was much impressed with Christ. But it shows that we create some of our own difficulties. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, but an earnest Pharisee. He was a man of culture and position. That position had won him respect and deference. He valued his position, and was afraid to do anything to hurt the esteem in which he was publicly held. So, in his caution, he "came to Jesus by night." That he came to put himself under instruction is clear from the fact that our Lord begins at once to teach; and that our Lord understood him perfectly is made plain by the other fact, that the first words of instruction went absolutely to the bottom of things, and practically overthrew all of Nicodemus' idea of any progress that he might seem already to have made.

It is very hard for a man in the position of Nicodemus not to feel and act toward truth in a patronizing manner, not to regard himself as of rather too much consequence, and not to think that truth ought to satisfy him, instead of trying to satisfy the truth himself. Our Lord begins at once "to teach with authority," since Nicodemus has confessed that He is a "Teacher come from God." And the first statement of our Lord is of the necessity and manner of the New Birth. Both are involved in being "born again," for the text has a double translation. It means, as well, "born from above."

Nicodemus is very much astonished, and gives some signs of wishing to argue the matter. While our Lord is not teaching "as the Scribes," Nicodemus is listening in their manner. And he asks, "How can a man be born again when he is old?" "Can natural birth be repeated?" But our Lord shows him that, though natural birth could be repeated, it would just bring us back to where we already are. We want something different: to be "born of Water and the Spirit." Or else we "cannot see," which must also mean understand and appreciate, "the Kingdom of God." We cannot enter into the spiritual life without this New Birth. Any life has to be begun by birth.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

Then Nicodemus shows that he has never thought about such things before; for he asks, "How can these things be?" Our Lord practically, though not unkindly, shows him that, though holding the place of a teacher in Israel, Nicodemus hasn't the least idea of the essence of things. He presses home upon His visitor the fact that the world and life are full of mysteries, and that religion must necessarily have mysteries of its own, though they are like other mysteries, because they come from the same God.

There is no way of finding these deeper things out without a revelation, and we will not be likely to accept a revelation if we have too deeply rooted ideas and prejudices as to what it ought to be, and have minds closed to the beauty and mystery of the things around us. "If I have told you earthly things," like the wonder of the winds, "and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" And besides, there is nobody else to tell of heavenly things. Nobody has ever been in heaven but the pre-existent Word, the Son of God who is now Son of Man. There is no safe message that He does not send or bring.

That this doctrine changed the first attitude of Nicodemus is plain from the way in which

Christ went on to tell of His own uplifting, like “the serpent in the wilderness,” of Himself as the object of faith, and of the Gift of God’s redeeming love, of the great condemnation which should consist in refusing the light of this new truth, the Light of the world.

Nicodemus after this interview gradually grew in courage and faith. He once raised his voice in defence of Christ, or in depreciation of a hasty judgment upon Him by the chiefs of the nation. And when the Lord was dead, he and Joseph of Arimathea, another great man, buried Him.

There is only time now to touch on the first part of our Lord’s answer to Nicodemus, the necessity of the new birth. It isn’t in man to like necessity when it is laid upon him. But we have learned not to quarrel with the necessity of natural birth. There is no other way to come into life, than through the travail of another. And when we are born we are always children; we can’t grow up in a day; we can’t take immediate care of ourselves; we do not know of ourselves what is best for us; we must be sheltered, guided, fed, and taught until “the time appointed of the Father.”

So our Lord does not give many sources of spiritual life, or suggest the occasional necessity of a new birth, or that only a few need it; but He

says that everyone who would enter into the new Kingdom, who would escape from bondage, who would conquer the flesh, who would obey the light *must* be born again, born from above. He must become a child all over again; be humble, simple, obedient, dependent, bide his time, yield to the discipline provided. He must "become a fool that he may become wise," for the wisdom of the world will only stand in the way of his learning anything; so much of it is absolutely false.

Not but what this necessity for a complete and humble and fundamental new beginning can be illustrated many times from things in the world. There is nothing unreasonable at all in Christ's position. And the further a man goes up toward the top of society, the more illustrations we can get. Suppose a boy has taken the first honor at the local High School, delivered the valedictory, and passed out of the school-doors with applause, and then receives an appointment to West Point; what, and how, is he regarded after he gets there? As anyone in particular? No, just as a beginner, who needs to forget that he ever knew anything, or was honored, or graduated. He is a new cadet, "a high private in the rear rank." He has entered into another world with a new code, new methods of study, new traditions.

Now after four years let him graduate from

the Academy as honorably as he did from the High School, and then what? He has to begin all over again to be the junior Second Lieutenant. He must not volunteer too much of his knowledge in a world of superiors. But these are only partial illustrations, because, in these cases, the man does know something after all, and only needs adjustment, humility, and patience, to come into his own. But suppose a man of literary culture, but no scientific training, determines to learn something of science, how does he begin? Why, nowhere but at the beginning!

Every science has foundations. You can't begin up in the air. These funny modern skyscrapers, where they seem to put in the tenth story first, are no real exception, for the building is really carried on the steel frame. There is no royal road to anything but the way of hard, careful work. And it is true of every science, every art, every business, as well as of our relations to God, that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The Church interprets our Lord's words about the New Birth as bearing closely upon Holy Baptism. The little babe is brought to the church, and we are asked to make him a member of that heavenly society, and we baptize him. A great general, like General Grant, in his last days seeks a new life, a new relation to God. He is baptized.

A President of the United States retires to private life after marvellous experiences and responsibilities, and thinks of heaven. He is baptized. And in some way the wisdom of the world is piqued, and says, How can you possibly attribute spiritual results to such a simple ceremony?

Well, why not? Why does the apple fall? Why doesn't it rise? Why does our food nourish us? Why doesn't it choke us? Why does a little extra heat over the gulf of Mexico cause a Texas storm? Why is anything simple? Or who understands simplicity? Let us go back to the servants of Naaman for sensible views. "My father, if the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean?"

It should not be opposition, but gratitude, that is aroused when we find that the Sacrament of the New Birth is so easy outwardly. It cannot be easy inwardly, after a man is old. It is only "the broken and contrite heart" that "God will not despise," that is able to receive the birth of the Spirit. Why God has linked things as He has is not for us to say; but that He has done so, and simply provided means for all of us to draw nigh, we must believe; for it is His Son who tells us of heavenly things.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

V.—A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou that living Water?—St. John 4: 11.

ROBABLY no more interesting religious conversation was ever held than that between our Lord and the woman of Samaria. It is greatly to our rejoicing and profit that He should have been willing to talk with her, and the narrative offers us a great study in making a spiritual approach. It is a wonderful picture. Here is Jacob's well outside the little town. The wayfarers have come along, and one, wearied by long walking, is left sitting and resting by the side of the well, while the others go on into the town to buy food. The woman comes out to the well alone, carrying her earthen water-jar. She has probably filled it in silence, and is ready to go back to the little city, when the stranger Jew asks her for a drink. The interest of the story leaps at once to higher meanings,

and the drink is lost sight of. Did He get it, or didn't He?

One inclines to wish that the woman may have been a little kinder than her answer, and that she may have put her first question while she was lowering the jar so the stranger could refresh Himself. But His real thirst was for souls. "How is it," said she, "that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" "The Jews," it is explained, "have no dealings with the Samaritans." But something in our Lord's response to this may indicate that the woman meant to refuse Him, at least at first. "If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and *He would have given thee* living water." Perhaps the words "*He would have given thee*" are meant to contrast Christ's willingness with the woman's unwillingness. But from this time on her interest is fully aroused. "Sir," she says, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?" Was she ironical in going on to ask, "Art Thou greater than our Father Jacob?" or did she really begin to feel the wonder of Christ's Person?

You all know the difference between what we call living water, and dead, or stagnant, water. A white rapid, or a bubbling spring would be living

water in our sense, but not in Christ's. No matter how cool, how pure, how light are the waters of earth, no matter how freely we drink of them, thirst returns. But he who has drunk of the true living water has the fountain in himself, a springing well, "springing up into everlasting life."

Is it any wonder that this woman, to whom water drawing from outside of the city was part of her daily drudgery, should exclaim, "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw?" But what are the next words of Christ? "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." The woman replied, "I have no husband." We cannot catch her tone exactly. But our Lord shows instantly His perfect knowledge of her past life, as well as her then present relationships, by saying, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly." This was most unexpected to the woman, who first tried to hide her confusion by saying, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet," and then to turn the conversation to another less pressing topic by raising the question as to which were right, the Jews or the Samaritans, in the place they had chosen for their worship.

But our Lord would not be denied in carrying the conversation to its proper end, that He might

lift the woman's soul to a realization of God as Spirit, and of worship as spiritual and possible everywhere. The Father was seeking for the worship of His children. Our Saviour, in His Father's Name, and in His own great weariness, had come to seek and to save her. So by God's mercy, this woman who had not been a good woman, who wasn't a good woman when she came out to the well, was transformed, as one of the first fruits of the Gospel, into an obedient servant and messenger. She went away to the city, told her story to the men, and brought many to the hearing of Christ's wonderful words, and to faith in Him.

The first step in her conversion was asking her to do a kind thing which was quite within her powers. Even if that should not succeed, it, at least, would have made her think whether she ought not to do it. We must, if we take this example, allow even bad people to do as much good as they can, and willingly make ourselves their debtors. The story is a great comfort and inspiration to us.

But does it not raise the question, why the Church in her ordinary organizations seems to do so little work with people like this woman, who need the Gospel so much. You see pleasing herself had still left her a drudge. Sin is never kind

to its votaries. May we not be caring too much for our reputations, and too little for sinners? And may not our effectiveness be so small, not only because we are so slow to begin such work, but are also slow to make quick enough use of our converts in extending it? Who are converting the Chinese now? Chinamen, who have been themselves converted to Christ. Who make rescue work successful, where men are consecrated enough to undertake it? Rescued men and women. They can do it, because, having been forgiven much, and loving much, they can speak of love and forgiveness. But do we love at all?

When one compares the beautiful cathedrals of England with those on the continent of Europe, one notices that, while they are perhaps not so large and not so high, they are not less beautifully proportioned, and even more artistically finished in some of their details. But they have so little color in them. The great English churches once had a great deal of color. But the painted glass was an offense to some of our Puritan forefathers, and they broke it, and then they whitewashed the pictured walls to hide the saints and angels painted there. Perhaps there were some things depicted there liable to superstitious use, that it was just as well to banish, but the coldness of the result calls aloud for color.

In a world of green and blue, of red and gold, of orange and purple, of lilies and roses, of violets and anemones, where God has set the temple of His holiness among the shining stars, it cannot be in anyway complete to have a cold, pale, flat or formal religion. The water of life is sparkling water, full of vigor and refreshment, full of joy and energy. If you want to begin to feel what this sparkle and bubbling life is, O man, O woman, Go, call thy husband, friend, brother to enjoy it with you, and quaff grace in sharing it. Our Lord was really giving it to the woman of Samaria when He was sending her as His messenger.

One would like very much to know what became of that woman of the well-side. Of course we do not really need to know, or we would have been told. We know a good deal of other women who learned of Christ. Mary Magdalene had been a far worse woman than this one, and yet Mary became a great saint, for she loved much. When our Lord says to a social outcast, "Go, and sin no more," He gives a hope as well as a command, and strength to fulfil the command.

If the woman had to go on with her daily tasks, drawing water at Jacob's well day after day, we may still surely hope that she tried to live as our Saviour had taught her, and to worship "in Spirit and in truth." And surely, too, the old

drudgery must have been lightened by the new gift of grace. Drinking of the living water, we may rest even while we work.

In that wonderful English romance, *John Inglesant*, there occurs an epitaph on a country clergyman which one may believe is not part of the fiction in that beautiful tale. It records that he was "full of cares and full of years. Of neither weary, but full of hope and of heaven." This would well describe a life lived in the refreshment which our Master bestows, the gift of the fountain within us, "springing up into everlasting life."

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

VI.—FAITH IS WORK.

What shall we do that we might work the works of God?

St. John 6:28.

UR Lord's discourse in the Synagogue at Capernaum, with His revelation of Himself as the Bread of Life, cannot be taken out of connection with His feeding the five thousand in the wilderness belonging to Bethsaida. The miracle had immeasurably astonished everybody. It had convinced the beholders that Jesus was "that prophet" that should come into the world, the one prophesied by Moses who should resemble him. If our Lord had chosen to go the path of popularity, the way the people wanted Him to lead them, the path was then immediately open to Him. The people would have made Him a king. Instead of allowing this, He slipped away quietly, and returned to Capernaum, and the people found Him in the Synagogue. He had hidden His escape by another

wonderful deed known only to His disciples, so that the people could not imagine how He came, nor did He try to enlighten them.

He takes up immediately the spiritual meaning of His miracle, and tells them that their reasons for seeking Him were quite unsatisfactory. They were not interested in the matter of His preaching, but they thought a person with such wonderful powers could be a great reliance to them. They did not have their eyes raised any higher than the betterment of their condition ; there was no thought of spiritual support. So our Lord urges them to lift their eyes higher. But they can only think for the moment how desirable it would be to be able to work miracles themselves, so they ask, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God ?”

Our Lord replies that the beginning of any advance, of any achievement, would have to be faith in Him. “This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” Faith is not the slight thing some people might suppose, it is not merely assent. The admission that Christ was a great prophet did not help towards it; it was rather in the way. Faith is so difficult, that the Scripture always treats it as God’s work in us. And it is of more consequence than anything else we can possibly attain to. The Jews respond by asking for “a sign.” They had evidently seen a

connection between the miraculous feeding just accomplished, and the gift of Manna to their fore-fathers in the wilderness.

But the likeness was not complete enough. The feeding of the five thousand had been primarily through a little bread put into Christ's hands by a young by-stander. The Manna was a real miracle, as they regarded it, substance and all. So they in effect say, "Do as much as Moses, and we will believe on you." But our Lord was not seeking to be accepted as the successor of Moses, and shows that they were mistaken in making the gift of Manna a work of Moses. It was a clear gift of God, up to whom, and to the true Food of souls, He was anxious to lead them. The Manna came down from heaven, but it was only a prophecy, a supply for the occasion. It accomplished in the end no more than any other daily bread. "Your fathers ate it and are dead."

Now, Christ goes on, there really does come to you the Bread, of which the Manna was only a type. This Bread is "Living Bread." It is in the Living Bread sent down from God that you are asked to have faith. "I am the Bread of Life." This seems to us now a perfectly natural claim after the mighty deed which Christ had just wrought. In whose power could He have done that except in God's, and who must He be to have

that power conferred upon Him? But remember, Christ was speaking in "His own city." He was so well known there that He couldn't be known differently from other people. And any claim to be something in Himself was at once rejected by many of His hearers.

They listened further, however, to a fuller unfolding of His teaching. He explains that, not only is He "the Bread of God," "the Bread of Life," but that partaking of Him is necessary for eternal life. The fruit of partaking of His Flesh and Blood would be eternal life and the resurrection of the body; and without that partaking there would be no such life at all. This, of course, was a prophecy of the Holy Communion, and is so understood by us. Taking Christ at His word to Nicodemus, and believing what He says here, the Church has announced that Baptism and the Holy Communion are not only "means of grace," but that they are "generally necessary to salvation." This is not a doctrine ecclesiastically invented, but a transcript of the scripture.

You will remember that a good many people followed Christ up to a certain point, and that the murmuring at His teaching is not always represented as the murmuring of the Jews, but sometimes as the murmuring of the disciples. There was murmuring of this latter sort here. So it is

not therefore remarkable that there has always been hesitancy in the Church about sacramental doctrine. It seems to be as hard for some people as it is easy and natural for others.

The doctrine Christ was expounding seemed to the Jews and to His disciples extreme, and almost revolting. The temptation to many, now, to get rid of the essential truth of our communication in Christ's Body and Blood is too great. They can only go part of the way with Him. Then to make salvation hinge on this participation seems strangely exclusive, and so one truth or another is changed or avoided to make the Gospel fit objections, instead of fitting ourselves to the Gospel.

Sinners in need of salvation are curiously captious. They are like men in danger of drowning, who should object to the rope that was thrown them, and should say, I don't like that rope; I would rather have a life preserver.

This, however, ought to be added, for it seems to be true: Our Lord was undoubtedly speaking in advance of the institution of that sacrament, wherein, after His Body had been visibly broken, and His Blood poured out, He would make us mystical partakers of the same, and continue these blessed benefits to His Church for all time. But, nevertheless, His words must have had a present force. Those who had already given themselves

to Christ must have seen great fitness in His statement that He was the Bread of Life. They must have realized that they could not live without Him, that He was their daily support.

When other half-disciples went away, these full believers found no one to go to. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life." He was not only the one who promised eternal life, but He may be said to have been the only one who ever had the idea of it. To whom, indeed, shall we go?

Now, when the Church preaches the "general necessity" of the sacraments, she does not at the same time disregard any portion of the truth, nor conceal that the purpose of the sacraments is to be means for effecting the general purposes of Christ. If the Jews at Capernaum had been disposed to accept Christ, they would not have had to wait until the institution of the Lord's Supper to begin to be partakers of Him. They would have been united to Him by faith, at least in a measure; but when the sacrament came, it would have drawn this union closer. Already His words could be taken as "spirit and life."

So the Church does not doubt that many are worthy communicants who yet do not visibly have the tokens of Christ's presence before them. We take great comfort on lonely death beds in the

thought of spiritual communion, and its reality and saving character, even failing the visible table. For then God spreads His own table to our faith. And the Church is trying to train herself to recognize goodness where she sees it. She sees people feeding on Christ, though they do not appreciate the sacraments. She thinks they are mistaken, indeed, she knows that, and that they are queer in their views; but has come to believe that queer people can be good people, and that in some way they are made communicants in spite of themselves. And, fortunately, the tendency of all real acceptance of grace is to bring people back to the use of normal means. It can be no accident that so many Quakers have come into the Church. They were seeking realities; the Baptism of the Spirit, the true Fellowship and Communion with Christ. Christ graciously accepted many of them, and gave them what they sought, and this brought to them the realization that whatever Christ instituted must be real; and because they came close to Him they learned humility of Him, and bowed themselves at the font and the altar. And we are greatly enriched by their return. God keep us in the way of faith: the sacramental way.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

VII.—THE REASON FOR FASTING.

Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, and Thy disciples fast not?—St. Matt. 9:14.



THE disciples of John were, at least, serious people, though they had thus far accepted only an introduction to better things. There is evidence that they were put forward, however, to ask this question by others; but, so soon as it was raised, they naturally would seek the answer. Fasting was considered a conspicuous virtue, an evidence of sanctity. All eastern peoples so regard it. Almost all religions inculcate it, we really know of no exception. Now Christianity from the very first made larger claims than any other religion. How could it be superior, as it claimed to be, if it neglected anything so fundamental as fasting? This seemed to be the state of mind in which John's disciples found themselves.

Now fasting does have its place in Christianity.

Our Lord Himself fasted, He attached great importance to it. He gave a number of precepts about how it was to be exercised, He attributed power to it. But He did not consider it important except as a means to an end. To fast often, just for the sake of fasting, that one might catalogue the occasions and tabulate one's virtues, this is quite the reverse of our Lord's view of fasting. And so He explains to John's disciples that fasting could be entirely out of place, just as much so as if one should bring funeral thoughts to the house of feasting. The children of the bride-chamber simply *couldn't* fast! It would have been an offense. And just so His disciples could not fast as long as they were enjoying the presence of their Lord. They might fast to prepare themselves to enter His presence, but never in His presence.

Now let us look closely at what fasting is, and what it is not. Fasting is not merely going without things. Our Lord's disciples went without a great many things. They gave up home comforts, home occupations, in order to be with Him. That was not counted fasting. They doubtless had very plain fare while they were with Him, and that was not counted fasting, though they probably had less to encourage appetite at any time than the most stringent Lenten rules would allow. That men living chiefly on bread and water should not

be considered as fasting, while others, having three meals a day and a considerable variety, may look upon themselves as doing it, seems at least to call for some explanation. Let us try to find it.

There is no doubt that hardship of any kind, if undergone purposefully in the line of our duty, and cheerfully endured for the sake of any good cause, is a real means of grace, and does resemble fasting somewhat in principle. But enduring it is a virtue in itself, which fasting hardly seems to be. And description or definition of fasting has to take into account its purpose. Its purpose is detachment from the world, and approach to God, laying ourselves bare and empty before Him, to be filled with spiritual bounty and strength. And in our Lord's life He always seems to have fasted rather on account of others than for Himself. He fasted to increase healing power.

So the details of fasting may vary about as much as one pleases. But it has to begin in the will. Whatever a man wills to go without for the sake of teaching him direct dependence upon God, for the sake of breaking down the power of habit (not merely bad habits, but any habit that limits the freedom of our service to God and man), for the sake of grace that he may better spread God's blessing, for the sake of revealing to him what have been his causes for thankfulness, for

the sake of telling him how far his apparent virtues are bound up with his comfort, this is the beginning of fasting.

The actual self-denial of fasting, therefore, may be quite limited, as it may be fully in our power to determine upon. The evidence of the act may be symbolic, more than anything else. Fasting which extends only to symbolic self denial may, however, be extremely valuable, more so than inexperienced prescriptions which we may make for ourselves. For the Church knows a good deal more about it than we do. And if we are to take it up seriously we had better do it in her way, under her guidance. For overdone fasting is no better than no fasting at all, and is apt to be done for imperfect reasons.

Remember clearly, therefore, that we are not counted righteous or unrighteous for fasting or not fasting, and we may so fast as to appear to people who have to come pretty close to us anything but heavenly minded; cross, mean, querulous, unreasonable. What possible advantage can that be to us? And then if we begin real fasting, it would be as unwise to begin with severity, as it would be to demand that a young athlete should try the hardest feats first, before he had been duly exercised as a preliminary.

The Church's idea, therefore, following our

Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, is to give considerable attention to such fasting as can be done brightly and cheerfully in the eye of the world without inconveniencing other people, without calling their attention to us, without even being noticed. It involves, if possible, the surrender of some time. Friday is designated in every week as a day of abstinence, measured, that is to say, thoughtful abstinence. The thought involved, the direction of the mind, is the most important part of it. And Friday is chosen as the weekly memorial of the Passion of Christ. Thus the mere thought brings us in the same direction that the fasting is intended to carry us, into fellowship with Christ.

Our Church says nothing specific about the kinds of food we may allow ourselves on abstinence days. But it seems well for us to consider ancient customs. For while it is probable that the Church meant to imply that the details were left to the individual, and were less important than the principle, it is also probable that it was thought unnecessary to prescribe what everyone would be likely to know without prescription. Everyone for centuries had been in the habit of abstaining from flesh meat, and eating fish where it was obtainable. The fish was the ancient symbol of the Christian. The Greek word for fish was com-

posed of the words which, in that language, stood for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. Thus, such food as custom permitted would accent the purpose of fasting, the direct approach to Christ.

Fasting undirected to any purpose is not recommended. All the holy men of old had the mind directed toward the special benefit they sought in drawing near. They simply could not conceive of fasting without prayer. They knew "man could not live by bread alone," but they also knew he could not live without the word and communion of God. So the saint, when he goes without bread, seeks the Bread of Life; when he goes without salt, seeks the savor of holiness; when he takes time from his own work and pleasure and goes apart, as it were, into the desert, he is seeking Him to transform the desert into the Garden of the Lord.

And in all things he is seeking for that mastery of life, that spiritual contentment which makes us perfectly happy with any thing we have, as long as we are sure of our place with God. Then, though "having nothing" we are "possessing all things." So the fruit of spiritual fasting is not exhaustion but new power, a new view of things, so that we see blessing in what we have, and do not repine because we haven't them all at once.

When Dean Hook, described as the greatest parish priest the modern English Church has known, was a young man, he made a trip to Scotland, and paid a visit to Bishop Alexander Jolly. The Scottish Church was then very poor. Bishop Jolly was living alone except for a young deacon who was his companion and chaplain. The Bishop invited the young English visitor to dinner. The meal consisted of potatoes without any thing else. There were no apologies. Hook has left it on record that, so wonderful was the Bishop's conversation, he never enjoyed a meal more in his life. This was *not* fasting. Nor is any man conscious of privation when he has arisen to that view of life our Saviour took when He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

VIII.—THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS.

Why do Thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not when they eat bread.—St. Matt. 15: 2.



OST of us do not do any very deep thinking about what makes things right or wrong. Two people get to talking on the subject. "Why is this wrong?" one asks; and the other says, "It's against the law." But what is the law? The word does not always mean quite the same thing.

What do you mean, for instance, when you speak of "the Law of Moses?" Do you mean the Ten Commandments, or do you mean the careful and elaborate ceremonial law, the details about clothes, sicknesses, food, travel; dry enough until you meet with such a wonderful flash of sentiment as this: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk?"

Go back to the books in which this Law of

Moses is contained, and you will see that the Ten Commandments are Universal Law. There is nothing there that can be superseded. Even the Sabbath Law covers a principle as well as certain details which we do not now apply. But the rest of the laws, though they were founded on good reasons, seem to have been all temporary. In our Lord's time, however, these were by no means all of the laws people were supposed to observe. There had been added a mass of details known as the tradition of the elders. And this was all regarded as law. And men were not at all clear that these added precepts were not just as sacred and holy as the Ten Commandments. Further—and this is very important—they were much easier to keep than the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments have a way of making you uncomfortable. They aren't as simple as they seem. But it is easy to be virtuous if it consists in small ceremonies and observances.

There were even ritual details about this hand-washing which really symplified the matter. You put your fingers into water just so far, and that was washing. You had obeyed the tradition. Were your hands clean? Oh, that was another matter. It made less difference. This was the pass things had come to in our Saviour's time. The Law was not only God's Law, but it was a

profession. Men were interested in seeing that its professors had a good living. And it is always the same story. A man might really be a holy and spiritual man in those old days, but he couldn't satisfy the scribes unless he were willing to be enslaved to red tape.

If a man's ox or ass fell into a pit, and was likely to be lamed or drowned, he might pull him out on the Sabbath day. But our Saviour was faulted for making a little wet clay with His own spittle in order to heal a man who had been born blind. He did this on the Sabbath. The man was counted as actually of less consequence than the dumb beast, because he couldn't be sold for money. Men who were keenly conscientious—if that is not too large a word—about paying tithes of the fruit of small seeds, who wore unusually wide borders to their garments, for religious ostentation, who would never omit a detail of ritual purification, who fasted one hundred and four times a year, instead of the one time decreed by the elder law and the few times added on account of historical reasons later, who were punctual at the synagogue, and all that, scrupled not at all to be unmerciful, avaricious, treacherous, vindictive, hard hearted. They did not want to be good, they only wanted to be correct.

Our Lord takes men right back to reasons.

The whole law was founded on the knowledge of what was best for man. It was severe, but it was also merciful and kind. There was always consideration for the poor, for animals, for sentiment. The sacrifices all meant great realities. Psalmist and prophet had understood that the soul needed purging with better things than outward sprinklings, that obedience and mercy were better than costly offerings. But legalism grew up in spite of the prophets. And our Lord struck directly at the false root.

He dealt slightly differently with these subjects when He was talking to the people themselves than when He was questioned by the people most responsible for these heavy burdens. He told the people that they might go on observing these precepts, if they only avoided imitating the iniquities of the formalist leaders. But when the issue was raised He met it fairly, and does not hesitate to show how entirely without moral meaning many of the traditions were.

There was a law of clean meats, things which might be eaten and things which might not be eaten, that had come down from Moses' time. There was a reason for this law. The forbidden things were all either liable to parasites which could be communicated to man, or were otherwise unwholesome. Our Lord would by no means have

suggested that this law should not be kept. But He did say that food could not of itself communicate defilement. The worst defilement was from a bad heart. The Pharisees were only concerned with the outside of things, the outside of cups and platters, the outside of life. If a thing had been ceremoniously washed, it made no difference to them whether it was clean or not. But our Lord knew that it was the centre of life that needed purifying. "Out of the heart," He said, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Now does this mean that Christ would have us break with the rules and conventions of society? By no means. A real Christian ought to have the best manners in the world. The rules of good society are many of them founded on the most excellent reasons, reasons of respect, consideration, cleanliness, and protection. But you cannot go far without finding customs that are a snare. Society—no, not society, but what falsely claims to be society—will ordain things immodest, dishonest, and unkind. A Christian must be brave enough to refuse these things respect. A most beautiful courtesy can be built up out of the New Testament, which will be open to no just criticism.

from anyone. If the heart be really right the manners cannot go far wrong, and even the inexperienced man, if he have fundamental kindness as his inward guide, needs no time at all to adjust himself to the slightly different details of what pass for good manners in different walks of life.

And we do well to stop and think before we criticize any manners that are different from our own, until we are sure they are worse. They may be better, though different. Country manners differ somewhat from city manners, but they are no worse. They are apt to be a great deal kinder and therefore better. But their special suitability is just where we find them. There is no need to drive out any other code. Keep to the reasons of things, and keep the heart in the right place.

Every Church with a ritual, and with its own customs, needs to caution its members to keep alive in their hearts a true instinct for essentials. It is possible to grow very critical over the details of our services, and more keen than kind in their observance. They were made to help us, we were not made for them. There is wide scope for mutual consideration in such matters as the music, the decorations, and the elaboration of the service. Taste is a thing that can be offered in sacrifice as well as wealth. Elaborate ceremonies can be conducted without reverence, and reverence shown

by the very simplest forms. But reverence is certainly more important than forms. Still, though we have plain tastes, the plain man must remember that there are others with perhaps wider culture, and with gifts which could be consecrated to a more splendid rendition of our worship. Reverence will be their guide as well as ours. And plain tastes may be sacrificed as well as elaborate ones.

Under the inward guidance of Christ we will "be pitiful, be courteous," we will "honour all men, and love the brotherhood," we will be "kind one to another, tender hearted and forgiving." The truly clean hands are the hands of honesty, and the hands of mercy.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

IX.—THE FIRST STONE.

Moses in the Law commanded that such should be stoned; but what sayest Thou?—St. John 8:4.



HERE were a number of very extreme penalties ordered for the grave offences against the Mosaic Law. The historical scriptures, however, which may be regarded as a sort of commentary on the Law, do not say very much about the actual infliction of these penalties. A lesser punishment seems to have been often regarded as substantially satisfying justice. The death penalty of Achan seems to have been the only instance of its kind, and it was administered under conditions like martial law. So, too, the case of the man put to death for Sabbath breaking early in the Wilderness sojourn is given as an isolated one, that, also, being under the conditions of martial law. An extreme penalty often expressed a weighty sense of the present public need. We all know the

difference between punishment of desertion from the army in time of peace, and of the same offence in the face of the enemy. In one case it is imprisonment, and in the other death. But the offence is the same. And a penalty to be inflicted is always dependent upon being able to find someone to undertake the act of punishment.

We occasionally hear people advocate the revival of the whipping-post for some class of cruel offenses, like wife-beating. Well, who is going to swing the lash? He would have to be rather a brute first, and if he wasn't, the act would have a brutalizing effect, or, at least, make him very much ashamed. A decent man would really have to be sentenced to do it, and would feel worse punished than the victim.

We are all familiar with clamors for reform that shake the political world from time to time. Then we have investigations, and grand juries, and the like, but the pity of it seems to be that a more vital interest is shown in getting people into jail, than in purifying the springs of action. Suppose every law, human or Divine, should be enforced against us. You would then be judged, not only on your present behavior, but account would have to be taken of every thing that has not been outlawed. And some things never outlaw. Or, suppose yourself to be made responsible

for personally carrying out the sentences on all the dishonest politicians whom you are anxious to see punished. It would be sure seriously to check your anxiety to have all penalties applied.

Now, in the case before us, the question asked our Lord was intended for a trap. It was intended to involve Him in a contradiction. We may suppose that the Jews expected some self-assertion of Christ which would assume to modify the Mosaic enactment. He had already claimed to be what Moses was not, the Son of God. The criminal was brought before Him, and there seems to have been no defense possible, or attempted. Moses had commanded that the guilty person should be stoned, though just why the Jews had not brought them both is hard to say, except that good people are always harder on the woman. So, after stating Moses' decree, they inquire, "But what sayest Thou?"

Our Lord does not make any answer in words. He does nothing to modify the law. He leaves it just as it was written. But He bent over till He could touch the ground with His finger. You know the old law was said to have been written with the Finger of God. That, however, was written on stone. Now Christ writes on the ground, as though He did not hear what was being said. Then, He rises and says to the circle of

men what is practically a confirmation of the sentence, and a demand for its immediate execution —*if they can stand it!* “Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone at her.” And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. He went on writing apparently for some time without looking at either the men or the woman, and all the accusers fell under conviction. So they all went out, one after another, beginning with the eldest, until our Lord was left alone with the woman, and He bade her, “Go, and sin no more.”

The thought is almost unavoidable that, when our Lord said, “He that is without sin among you,” there was a real, though unexpressed, emphasis upon *this* sin. It can hardly be taken differently, for nothing else was under consideration. If they all were guilty, they had all condemned themselves to death, by that law to which they had appealed to decide the fate of the woman before them. True, they may not have meant to confess such an extreme infraction of the law as would have condemned them to death; but they did admit some degree of similar guilt.

And this is important for us to think about. Our Lord extends each one of the moral commandments by showing us the principle involved. The first breach of every commandment is in the heart.

The sin of the heart may never be known, because it is not in our power to carry the secret desire out in action. But the sin is registered *as sin*, and will so be declared in the judgment.

Suppose, for instance, we turn back to the consideration of our great moral scandal, what we call "grafting," and suppose we are leading the hue and cry after the offenders. Just stop a moment. Did you ever graft? The practice runs through almost all walks of life. It is half unconsciously resorted to in private ways by many who do not see the resemblance between their own behavior, and what they object to in public officers. No, very few people are absolutely honest. They mean to be, but they don't think quickly enough; they break down on the details. If there were no such thing as mercy, most people would have to go to jail. But jail is no place to send people to reform them, not as jails are; and we believe in reform. The main emphasis therefore ought to be just where Christ put it: "Sin no more."

And, because we realize that we are ourselves the subjects of mercy, it ought to be unthinkable that we should be careless of conditions that make it almost impossible for people to accept this merciful parole. There are agencies at work, almost all bound up with sordid money getting, that tend to render reformation in many cases an

almost impossible thing. To reform, you have to fight your own evil passions. This is hard enough without anything else working against you. But suppose everything else seems to be against you, and no helping hand is offered, and there is no roof for you except to go back to the bad associations you came from. Then how desperate the chances for you!

It takes a long time for us to learn that our Lord really meant things just as He said them. Sometimes it is hard for us to believe that we have been forgiven, or can be forgiven. But it is even harder to realize that God is interested in real outcasts, and is willing to forgive them. But, unless we can be interested in all those for whom Christ died, we may find our own hold on forgiveness slipping away. "We have left undone those things that we ought to have done."

So do not be so anxious to punish sinners as you are to help them to a better life. Sin often takes care of its own punishment in a way that even forgiveness does not much mitigate; sometimes forgiveness makes past sin pain us worse, because then we realize that we have sinned against love. Being forgiven yourself, "Sin no more lest a worse thing happen unto thee"; and, knowing that there is forgiveness for others, even the worst, do your active best as a responsible

member of society to see that it is made halfway possible for great offenders to take the Saviour at His word. What is written on the ground can be washed out by the next rain. We must learn to forget, to let the tears of nature obliterate the past. We must learn to remember that good people have been bad; but that bad people, by the mercy of God, can become good.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

X.—NO FAITH, NO POWER.

Why could not we cast him out?—St. Matt. 17:19.



HE miracle of the healing of the demoniac child, with which this question is connected, occurred just as Christ was come down from the Mount of the Transfiguration. He had with Him on the mountain three of His disciples, the three who were always the closest companions He had in supreme moments. He left the other nine at the foot of the mountain waiting for Him. His absence was probably for a night, and as long as it took to go and come. These nine were not absolutely alone; they were accessible to whomsoever wanted to come, and they were exposed to questions and objections by the scribes, as well as liable to be called upon for works of healing. Judas was, of course, with them, and it was less than a year before he betrayed our Lord. But all had had some experience of power over disease and

unclean spirits. Judas himself, as we believe, had had this experience, for there seems no history of failure until this occasion.

An afflicted father brings to the nine his demoniac son; it was an aggravated case. The symptoms as described read very much like a desperate case of epilepsy. But our Lord treats it as a demoniac possession, and indeed it was very pitiful. The case was also of very long standing.

The father had, we may suppose, intended to bring the unfortunate youth to Christ Himself, but found that He was absent. But as a next resort he appeals to the disciples. They undertook the exorcism, and, probably to their astonishment, failed. Remember, it is the only case of failure recorded, though, of our Lord Himself it is said on a certain occasion, "He could there do no mighty work because of their unbelief." But this means, we may suppose, that He knew the conditions too well to make a failing attempt.

Our Lord's return was at a critical moment. The scribes were making the most of the disciples' failure, and no doubt increasing their dismay. There had gathered a multitude besides. And thus the Master's return was most welcome to all who were distressed by the failure. The father had begun to lose hope. But our Lord's kindly interest draws the whole story from him, of the

sudden cruel seizures, and his own distress; and then comes the desperate appeal, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion upon us and help us." Our Lord repeats this "if Thou canst" in His reply: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And then the man cried out with tears: "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And at once the Lord heals the boy with a word, charging the dumb and deaf spirit to come out of him.

No more elementary faith is expressed anywhere in the Gospel than the man's saying, "*If Thou canst do anything.*" There is not enough faith for a creed, but there is just enough for a prayer. If there is enough for a prayer the Lord will answer, and His first answer was to encourage belief, as much as there was, and tell the father that faith recognized no impossibilities.

Beyond the censure implied in the exclamation "O faithless generation," when the boy was brought to Him and He had been told of His disciples' failure, our Lord said nothing to His disciples until they asked Him privately why they had failed. Then He answers that it was because of their unbelief; that if they had "faith as a grain of mustard seed," they would be able to "say to this mountain, be thou removed to yonder place, and it would remove, and that nothing should be

impossible to them." Then He adds, "Howbeit, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Let us take the parts of this answer in reverse order. This Church has high ideas of the authority of the ministry. That authority is stated to be derived from Christ, and yet she is singularly slow to have the ministry speak with authority. The great acts of the ministry, like the absolution in the Holy Communion and the Consecration of the Eucharist, are done by prayer. "Prayer and fasting" were frequent companions of our Lord's ministry. If, then, the Church seems to be weak in her conflict with the dark powers of evil, it is because she is not using her two great engines. Our services are so beautiful, our liturgy so appealing, that sometimes we forget that the Church is not here just for us, and our delight in her. There are those possessed with devils. And we must enter into deadly conflict on their behalf.

Then as to the quality and power of real faith, faith "as a grain of mustard seed." That, our Lord says, is as "the least of all seeds." But a seed is alive, and will grow if it has any chance at all. The saying about the mountain and its removal is, of course, a figure of speech, an attempt to say how mighty faith is. If the Transfiguration was on Mt. Hermon, as is supposed,

then this miracle was in view of Hermon, and that vast mountain was used to point the figure. But taking it literally would meet with this difficulty: faith only wants to act according to the will of God, and we do not know anything of this will which would encourage us to try to move an actual mountain. But, figuratively, any difficulty is a mountain, if it is a big enough difficulty. And nobody removes difficulties who regards them as impossibilities.

The Panama canal has been dug with steam shovels, and faith. It never would have been begun without faith. Plenty of people had no faith, and they were opposed even to attempting in any way to attack such a big undertaking; but somebody furnished the faith. There were actual mountains of earth, there was the mountain of disease, there was the mountain of political opposition, there was the mountain of the record of failure; all these have been moved, until now we see the end. This has been done by men through faith, not in God, but merely in the possibility of the thing. But faith in God is faith in the Almighty.

This is the difference between human faith and real divine faith. The faith that it took to dig the canal was really faith in man. It was just something bigger than had yet been done. It is

not an adequate illustration of the faith into which Christ would have us enter. The disciples had cast out devils before. They probably had a human expectation that they would succeed this time, faith in themselves, based upon their previous experience. But it wasn't enough. When the Saviour says "nothing shall be impossible" to real faith, it is because nothing is impossible with God, and faith unites to God and gives us access to His power according to our union with Him, that is, according to His love.

So prayer—the voice of faith, but the voice of humility—and fasting—the keen test of motive, the purifier of desire—are our best engines still of moving the mountains of sin, of darkness, of evil possession. When the Lord healed this boy He came fresh from the contemplation of the Cross which was waiting for Him. Let us also contemplate the Cross. This will give us the assurance we may need that it is God's will to destroy the works of the devil, that it is His will that we should coöperate with Him; that no questionings of scribes, no sense that too much has been asked of us, may prevent us, or hold us back from a whole-hearted surrender to God's service.

One man and God are always a majority. We learn from St. Paul that he was for a time much occupied with his own afflictions, but that finally

he had the message: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." From that assurance it was not a very long step to an outlook on the world and work completely in harmony with the words of Christ. Christ said "nothing shall be impossible"; St. Paul confesses, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." If we cannot say that yet, let us hope the grain of mustard seed will grow.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XI.—THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS.

How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?—St. Matt. 18: 21.

 E know the fundamental error which underlay this question of Simon Peter, but we do not often stop to consider how great an advance it marks in his mind. How many people are likely to be put into such close relations to us that they could have the opportunity of sinning against us seven times in the same way?

Humanly speaking, a seven-fold forgiveness seems a very large one. But of course there are relationships that are constant, or approximately so, that do many times multiply the opportunities for repeated complaint. Until a man is really converted, he is morally sure to fail on his weak side as often as the special temptation arises. The Psalmist's illustration of Israel's failure, "Starting aside like a broken bow," shows what we mean.

Every time you draw the bow you reveal the defect. And family life is so hard at times because the faults we have to encounter and contend with are habits, characteristics, which occur not once or seven times, but are constantly recurring.

This illustrates of how little consequence a seven-fold forgiveness could be as between real brothers. But it is doubtful if Peter really meant to limit the question to actual brothers. We can believe that, not only would he have included, according to Jewish custom, all his fairly intimate relations among his brothers, but that he had been long enough with Christ to have learned to read brotherhood in a much larger sense.

The Jews used many numbers in a symbolic sense. How widely this was done perhaps we cannot easily find out. But seven was in a special sense regarded by them as the perfect number, the symbol of perfection. But it was easy to forget that it was a symbol, and therefore easy to substitute it for perfection itself. This was the trap Peter had fallen into. Forgiveness, to him, was a specific act. It had no necessary connection with love. It need not be spiritual. And you can see how its quality would be vitiated by thus limiting it as a duty to a fixed number of repetitions. At the sixth or seventh time the mind would have begun already to expect the eighth offense, to be

on the lookout for it, and to be in a subconscious way occupied with the revenge.

Think, too, of the reasons underlying forgiveness. We forgive for our own sakes, our own characters to a large degree. But it is also impossible not to think of people who sin against us as either more or less deserving of forgiveness, and this desert is a good deal connected with their own attitude toward their offense. They might commit it ten times in continued, deliberate obstinacy, and on the eleventh time they might begin to be sorry. Then would be the real time for forgiveness. The previous leniency would have been a good thing for the man exercising it, but it would not have begun to do any good outside until the offender was sorry. The main thing in life is character.

Our Lord's answer to Peter took, as it were, two steps at once. Peter could have hardly taken it in without at least two mental actions. "I say not unto you until seven times, but until seventy times seven." The thought of seven as the perfect number still runs through the figures given by our Lord, but Peter is made to think at once, "Why, here is a perfect number, too! Here is a thought of intensified, multiplied perfection, if such a thing be possible! And as there can be no such

thing as more perfect perfection, I must have taken the thought of seven in a wrong way."

For what would seventy times seven amount to in numbers? It would be four hundred and ninety. So, as we would never be likely to have as many opportunities for forgiveness with one person as that, and as we couldn't possibly keep count, and it would make us permanently unhappy to try to do so, why, it is plain that we must always forgive. That is, we must preserve the same attitude toward the offender that God does, or that a wise and tender and patient father does, hoping for the day of betterment, the change of heart, the work of love.

We often hear it said that first offenders ought to be more leniently dealt with than old hands in sin. But this has limitations. The time for punishment, if ever, is the first offense, and the punishment ought to be sharp, but then it ought to be short. And when it is through with it ought never to be mentioned again. Society has an unjust way of making a short jail sentence last forever. But if the punishment of the first offense does not succeed in making the offender realize what he has done, we may have to wait a good while before we get results. In work with souls, as with minds, we have to deal with something very like a time-

lock. It may be the four hundred and ninetieth time that counts.

There is a very simple chemical experiment taken from the manufacture of friction matches, which is sometimes used to make a little fun in a school laboratory. Three substances are used in some kinds of matches, but a match can be made with sulphur and chlorate of potash alone. These have to be combined in the most intimate proportions before friction will set them off. In the experiment, a green boy is brought in to mix a small quantity of flowers of sulphur and chlorate of potash with a mortar and pestle. He can mix, and mix again for several minutes, and nothing much happens—it all happens at once!

This is what happens in family life. First correction may have failed. A boy or girl apparently settles into thoughtlessness of any improvement in promptness, in neatness, in consideration for the law of the house. Correction can be only gently applied, the friction of love. It may take years to show improvement, and then conversion, or something analogous, happens all at once. The four hundred and ninety first time has come, and brought the perfect result of forgiveness.

Our Lord enforces this lesson by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. He has been forgiven by an indulgent master a huge sum, too huge for

any man to pay in a lifetime. Immediately on being declared free, he goes out and finds a fellow servant who owes him a reasonable amount, which could easily be worked off if some accommodation were showed. But nothing is too severe for the collection of the little debt. No mercy is given, no facility or opportunity granted. This shows that forgiveness has done the first servant no good, and it is therefore withdrawn. Forgiveness stands as an offer for us as long as there remains the least hope of returning good. But it seems impossible for forgiveness to be truly accepted without love. The love may be rudimentary at first, but, as the sense of forgiveness grows, the love should grow.

The man who owed the ten thousand talents had no sense of what we may call the proportion of virtue. The vast sum apparently meant nothing to him; the hundred pence meant a great deal. And so we hardly ever realize the greatness of our debt to mercy. We are all really hopelessly in debt. We have nothing to pay. All we might try to pay with, already belongs to God. And yet we accept the statement of the Divine pardon with a sort of nonchalance, promising insincere and impossible things, if only we may escape from condemnation. We think more of God as the ordainer of punishment than as the Author of Life. And

we have no mercy for others. Was ever any image more pathetic than this of Isaiah? "All day long have I stretched out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." This describes both our Heavenly Father and us. He has bestowed His forgiveness unto seventy times seven. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XII.—ETERNAL LIFE.

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?—St. Luke 10: 25; 18: 18.

F all the times that this important question was put to our Lord, we have the record of but two. The first time, the question is represented as being asked by “a certain lawyer.” When we read in our version that the lawyer “tempted” Christ, it seems unnecessary to assume that the word means any more here than testing, or proving. The Queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon with hard questions, but it was not meant in an unfriendly way. This lawyer showed considerable spiritual insight. For, when our Lord returned his question by asking him what was “written in the Law?” the man went directly for an answer to those two precepts which our Lord Himself elsewhere has described as “the First and Great Commandment,”

and “the second, which was like unto it,” saying at the same time that both the Law and the Prophets hung upon those two. This answer our Lord approved. Fortunately, the lawyer was moved then to ask another question, “Who is my neighbor?” And to that question we owe the beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan.

The second occasion we have recorded is known as the episode of the Rich Young Man, or the young Ruler, as he is described by St. Luke; for we have three accounts of the story. In this case there is no doubt of the choice character of the person inquiring. He was greatly concerned about salvation, and our Lord was so drawn to him that He offered him what looks like the same terms He gave His apostles. But at the beginning He throws back the young man, as He had the lawyer, upon his own stores of Scripture knowledge, and says, “If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the Commandments”; and when the young man enquires for a supposed new law, refers him to those old moral precepts which the young ruler instantly asserts he has “kept from his youth up.” Then our Lord, who undoubtedly recognized that this answer was made in good faith, and had some basis of truth, is said to have looked upon His visitor with peculiar love, and to have answered, “One thing thou lackest. Go and

sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me." The young man is said to have been "sad at that saying," and to have "gone away sorrowful," "for he was very rich." He could not have accepted an apostleship on those terms.

Now it must not be supposed that our Lord meant to say that the giving away of his fortune was what would win eternal life for the young ruler. What He did mean was that the fortune stood in his way. It prevented him from having full faith in God. To him it would have been possible to say that God takes care of us, and he would have been able to give it an apparently full assent; but not so that he could have trusted himself to God so completely that he would have been willing to try life without money in hand.

Our Lord had not asked him to do anything that the twelve apostles had not done. And some of them had not been exactly poor. Zebedee, the father of James and John, had his own boat, and his hired servants, and was probably esteemed well off by people of his own trade. Matthew was probably in the way of making considerable money as a publican, if he had been willing to do as other publicans did. They had left all and followed Christ, and that was what Christ asked the young ruler to do. And what Christ had to offer,

even in this life, naturally considered does not seem so small, that is, if you have had experience of what life really offers that has a good taste. When Peter asked, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee, what shall we have, therefore?" Our Lord answers, "Manifold more in this present time," but "with persecutions," and "in the end eternal life."

The young man here, and the lawyer before, emphasized the idea in their own minds that eternal life could be won by works: "What shall I do?" The answer to the lawyer, or the way in which he was made to answer himself, is Love. But Love is not a work. It is a condition of the heart. It can be called a work, however, if it be thought of as an effect, as well as the cause of all good works. True love cannot exist without faith, and true faith cannot exist without love.

The young man was serious when he asserted himself to have kept all the commandments, for he did not see so deeply as the lawyer did what was involved in keeping them. And what our Lord asked of him was also love. When you can give up anything for another cause, you show that you love that cause best for which you are willing to make the sacrifice. If you love God above all things, then you will not let *things* come between you and God. If you love things better than you

love God, you are a practical idolater. God is not *your* God.

Almost everybody nowadays has, either from one point of view or another, great possessions. People generally have the means of securing comforts which even the richest in our Lord's day never had. A man is really rich if he can gratify his principal tastes. But, of course, very few of us think we are rich. But we have enough to make a test case of our own condition. What the Gospel sets before us is eternal life. The terms on which this life is offered to us are really everywhere the same, though they seem to vary. What makes them seem to vary is the fact that our possessions vary. But our possessions are not of so much importance in the matter as our attitude toward them. If we get so dependent upon them, either mentally or actually, that they prevent us from doing a loving duty to God and man, then we do not own them, but they own us. The rich young man thought he had great possessions, but they had him. But possessions not only vary between individuals, but the same man has more or less property at different times. And most of us have had enough experience of varying degrees of fortune that we can really examine the question, whether a larger salary, or bank account, has ever made any substantial difference in our happiness.

We really can't make an argument that true happiness has anything to do with it. We can argue for comfort as the result of riches, but every kind of increase in property brings more anxiety than anything else.

Take the same man at intervals five years apart in his life. Suppose at the first date he has a thousand dollars in the bank, and a salary of a thousand dollars. His thousand in the bank shows that he can save a little on his income, or we are supposing that to be the case. Such a man has very little anxiety about life. He can easily satisfy his modest wants, as long as they stay modest. If the call of God came to him to give up his business, and devote himself entirely to God's service, it would not be very hard for him to yield himself up. He has had enough; but not enough to fetter him in turning to higher things.

Let five years pass away. His salary has been doubled. He has enough now in the bank to make its investment a serious question. A special partnership may be open to him. The call to Divine service comes again, and this time the money is in the way. The equation looks alike in each case. We call the man A. and his unknown amount of property "x," because we can assign any value to "x" that we please. Then A plus "x" minus "x," equals A, no matter what value you give "x."

(The man, plus his property, minus his property, equals the man.) That is algebraically true, but not morally true, because morally the greater the value of "x" the less is the proportionate value of A in the equation. The man seems to shrink in importance as compared to the money. So the peculiar insanity that lurks for millionaires is the fear that they may lose their money. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" is not only religion, but common sense.

Our Lord does not ask everyone to take Him literally, as He did the rich young man. And some of us might, even if we wanted to do it, have some difficulty in disposing of all of our property if the receivers had to take everything we had, our liabilities as well as our resources, and we can't morally give things except into responsible hands. What, however, all of us are certainly required to do is to use what we have as responsible to God, and to strive to be just as good servants of God *through* what we have, as we could possibly be *without* it. We have to make the mental dedication of everything, if we are to keep on owning it. We ourselves must be Christ's. If we are Christ's, then what we have is Christ's. Under no circumstances can we get more than our board and our clothes out of it, no matter how we use it.

But it will certainly increase our peace of

mind if we can approve, and think Christ would approve, of where we put it. Christ apparently says that money can go to heaven, not actually, of course, but as a transferred account, a transferred force. If it stays here, a man can die a hundred million dollars poor; if it works for God, he can go to heaven a thousand friends rich. So, from a responsible point of view, a man ought to look upon the rapid increase of wealth with a sort of prayerful terror. "Let not me, O Lord, be 'weighed in the balance and found wanting' with these enlarged responsibilities. Let me not be tempted to think of my wealth as having any rights, my estate as anything that has claims in itself. Let me not strive to increase it, or protect it, by unlawful, unfair or unmerciful means. Help me to pay my taxes as cheerfully as when they were small; help me to look beyond, and to Thee. Enlarge my love to *Thy* family, whether mine be large or small. If riches increase, let my outlook, my sympathy, my brotherly help, increase. If it is hard to enter into the kingdom, *still let me enter*; for it is dark outside."

Let us change the equation a little. We spoke of A. plus "x," let us rather speak of A. plus "x" plus "y." Let "y" be love. Then if "y" be large enough, though "x" be zero, a man can work hard and sleep soft. But if "y" be too small,

though “x” be ever so large, the man will have to work just as hard, but he will sleep cold.

For love is life; and, because love is also knowledge, we may say, “This is Life Eternal, that they may (love) Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XIII.—THE WAY HOME.

Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?—St. John 14: 5.



HERE are no questions oftener in the minds of serious men who find themselves in the midst of mysterious life without their volition, than the “Whither?” and the “Way.” Our Lord had just begun a great discourse to His disciples alone, one which, if pastoral experience proves anything, is dearer to Christians than almost any other of His utterances; and had begun to tell about His Father’s House, and the many chambers there for the children when they came home, and had said, “Whither I go ye know and the Way ye know.” The “Whither” was, of course, to His Father’s House, to prepare for the coming thither of the disciples who had believed on Him, and those who should afterwards believe on Him “through their word.”

But Thomas was of a peculiar temperament,

sad and foreboding, and interrupts with a very improper contradiction, which nevertheless, we cannot help being glad that he made. "Lord, we know *not* whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" And to this our Lord answers with one of His most wonderful utterances: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me ye should have known the Father, and henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." It takes a good while for words like these to sink into men's minds, and Philip shows immediately that, like us, he often needs to hear again.

But let us take the answer to Thomas as it stands, for it is of very broad application. It is hard, however, to put out of mind while we consider it another wonderful description of Himself by our Lord, made to the Apostle St. John in the Isle of Patmos: "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty."

Of all seekers, none have done more service to the world than those first of the ancient Greeks who formulated, for the men of all time, the questions which had to be asked. At the dawn of Greek philosophy, as far as we have the record of the seekers, the first question that men asked was, *What was the Beginning of everything?*

Their word for beginning was *Arche*,* the very word used by Christ in the Revelation. The philosophers answered their own question, or guessed at the answer variously. Some said it was water; some said it was fire; some said it was number; some said it was constant flux, or becoming; some said it was Mind; and by and by the question wore itself out; because men indeed thought some of the answers clever, and interesting, but they did not feel sure enough about any of them. And, besides, they began to be more interested in another question, and that was, *What is the End?*

In the Arche had been included all that is involved in the search for reasons and first principles, the nature of things. And, in the End they sought was involved the destiny of man and everything else, the purpose or goal of things, and finally something like Virtue, or the thing that was worthy to be sought for its own sake. And they got so many answers to this that again they tired out. The word they used for the End was *Telos*. And that is the word used in the Revelation for the Ending which Christ also claims to be.

When they had got to the point that they had tried all answers to both these questions (and pure philosophy has never found any more than they

* Pronounce it *Ar-che*.

did then in the long ago), they began asking a third question, born partly of their perplexity, and partly growing out of the search for virtue, *What is the true Way to live?* This they called the *Ethos*, from which we get our word Ethics, the science of morals, or the Way. Just as the Arche or Alpha was the study of the Past or *Was*, and the Telos was the study of the Future or *Is to come*, so the Ethos was the study of the *Now*, Life to-day.

Put with this now our Lord's answer to the perplexity of St. Thomas, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," and you see that Life is the Arche, or Beginning, and that Truth is the End or purpose, and the Way being in the same Person is both the True Way and the Living Way. These very words are used in the Epistle to the Hebrews. So that Christ claims to be the Satisfaction and Answer of all the questions about life which can ever be asked. It was no wonder that the old philosophers were not satisfied with their own answers. They were not satisfied, because they did not have the right answer. Nor is it peculiar that all the questions should have the same answer, since it is plain that Nature is a Unity. And, if it came from God, it must also go to God, and constantly be considered in the light of the will of God.

There were two principal schools of Greek philosophy which grew out of the study of Ethics. One was called the school of Epicurus, and taught that the right way to live was to regard pleasure as the solution of life. We must live, according to them, so as to get the most out of life. Of course, some of them regarded higher sorts of pleasure than the others, some looked to intellectual and aesthetic pleasures with the rest. But some were just sensual. So, in the main, this was a very degrading theory in its results. It was well expressed in a phrase as old as Isaiah, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The other school, much nobler, was called the Stoic school, from the Stoa, or porch, where their philosophy was first taught. They taught reverence for virtue, the life of gravity, moderation and reason. They had some great followers, but could not get over the feeling that life was in some way bad; and when they could not endure things any longer, they simply killed themselves.

Now how different from "the Way" as set forth by Christ! He would not have us live without Pleasure, but He would not have us mistake what pleasure really is. He teaches the *delight* of duty, not merely the virtue of it. The Way is the path of self sacrifice, but it is made sweet with love. So life is not, as the Stoics thought, evil; it is a

precious gift, a probation, a good school of preparation for higher things. So that suicide spells defeat, whereas the Christian believes in victory. Our Lord says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Everything, therefore, is, as we say, all of a piece. The Beginning of everything, the first letter of the Alphabet of Wisdom, the Alpha or Greek A, is founded in the character of God, who is Love. The End of everything, the Omega, the last letter of the Greek alphabet, standing relatively where our Z does, is in the Bosom and Home of our God, who is Love, the manifestation of the Father, who is "the Brightness of the Father's glory," and "the Express Image of His Person"; or, as the Greek word puts it, the "Character" of the Father. This is why no man cometh to our Heavenly Father but by Christ, and there can be no other revelation. This is why we need nothing but Christ, and He is the satisfaction of the mind as well as the heart; sought by the Wise Men, and sought by the Shepherds, the Desire of All nations; Wisdom, Righteousness, and Life.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XIV.—PROFIT THROUGH AFFLICITION.

Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?—St. John 9: 2.

OW and then the disciples appear as if they were standing, or trying to stand, in the way of Christ's beneficent purposes. They could not understand why He should allow people to impose upon Him. At other times they were made the ministers of His good will, but they never seemed to initiate anything. See, for instance, with what different eyes Christ looked upon suffering! They saw this man just as soon as Christ did, and He appears to have waited for them to speak about him. One would naturally suppose that they would have suggested that our Lord should heal the man. They knew from common report that he had been born blind, but nothing seemed to interest them, or to be suggested by the sight of him, but a theological question. He was blind,

he was a beggar, he always had been blind, he would probably go on begging. That was all there was to it, but this very interesting theological question.

Our Lord does not decline the question, but the man interests Him a great deal more than the question. So He answers briefly, but does not delay to heal, and in so doing enlightened, not only the man, but all of us.

If the disciples had asked merely whether the man was born so because of the sin of his parents, we could have understood the question. We all know the Second Commandment, and we know that thousands of babies are born blind, and with other terrible troubles, because of their parents' sin. But it is hard to understand at first what they meant by asking if the man were born blind because *he* had sinned. He could not sin, we would suppose, before he was born. It might have put a different face on it if the Jews had believed in transmigration, the successive existence of the same soul in different bodies; but they didn't. What they probably did speculatively imagine was, that God had foreseen some sin that the man would commit, and thought that His justice might punish such a sin in advance of its commission, or His mercy might prevent even the sin by taking away the sight that might have led to it. Such ideas

have really had considerable influence on post-reformation theology.

Our Lord, however, silences the speculation at once, and says that the cause of the blindness was no specific sin. Of course, all our troubles go back to sin, our sinful condition; but a good deal of our trouble can be laid at no particular person's door. This it had been darkly felt before might be true, and the Book of Job is an attempt to throw some light on the subject. Nor is the book, although very wonderful, altogether the full answer that we now think we have. It is just as true that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," as it is that "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children." And in this particular instance, and in the case of the death of Lazarus, our Lord tells us that the final purpose of it all was to make a signal illustration to all who should behold of the glory and works of God.

This blind man was not only a good man, but, if we can judge anything about him from a few strokes of delineation, he was a *very* good man. Blindness so seldom seems to embitter people. This man had great faith and great religious insight. He knew, against the false view of the Pharisees, that such power and mercy as Christ showed upon him could not proceed from an evil source. The Jews could not shake his faith that

Christ was good. He was no pessimist, which shows that he had not been, on the whole, unhappy. And, of course, you have to judge life as a whole. You may judge maternity, if you like, wholly by its pains. If you do, you judge wrong. And so this affliction, which lasted from the man's birth until he met Christ, then resulted in an unclouded view of the Saviour, and made the man a disciple, as well as a noble example of constancy under persecution.

The Gospels have not done away with the mystery of suffering. They have added mystery to it, for the Cross stands for the most mysterious of all suffering. But the Gospel has certainly reconciled us to it in large degree through the Cross. It has showed how fruitful it is. It not only has some uses, but far-reaching fruits. In healing this blind man the Saviour not only helped him, but all who beheld, and all who have ever heard the story of it. They show us that a man may do good by bearing pain, and that God may be doing good to him by allowing him to bear pain, and this in more ways than one. Our painful limitations often deprive us of opportunities to sin. They are temptations in themselves, but a protection against other temptations. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," is a text that probably refers to that extremity of

suffering which is another way of stating death, yet has a measure of truth in the case of any disabling suffering. For suffering does introduce us into the life of sympathy, which is a greatly abounding life, as some here might be able to illustrate.

The way in which the Lord healed this man is deeply interesting. There was a sort of appeal to the dead sense. He first said, and we may believe the man heard Him, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Then He spat on the ground, and out of the moist clay made a lump which He smeared upon the man's eyes, and then told him to do something for himself: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," a mystical name, given as meaning "Sent." The man obeyed exactly, and was at once restored. Our Lord meanwhile had gone on His way, and we leave the story here.

This raises the question whether the case, though regarded by everybody as hopeless, may not have been a very simple one after all. Perhaps anyone might have healed him at any time by using the same simple methods, but nobody tried. It takes a great deal of knowledge to know when a thing is simple. "Since the world began hath it not been heard that a man hath opened the eyes of one that was born blind?" That was a state-

ment of fact. It is not said that anyone had ever tried to. People are always stating, in advance of experiment, that things are impossible. They philosophized about the blindness, stated the ancient theory of impossibility, and offered no remedies.

Why is it that so many physicians do not seem to know that Christ, more than anyone else, opened the eyes of the profession to the possibilities of healing? And in old times it was not only that men could not do things because they hadn't tried; they did not care to try. And Christ not only taught that there ought to be a remedy for everything, and that with God nothing should be impossible, but He made us want to imitate Him, want to do good. How the zone of incurable diseases has been narrowed in the last few decades by men who, with a faith in the reasonableness of nature, have sought the remedy which they felt God must have provided, and refused to be satisfied until they found it! Whether all these men were avowedly Christian or not, it was Christ that emancipated the human mind and heart; it was Christ that showed that God knows nothing about incurableness, and if He doesn't know it, there must be no such thing.

Your Christianity and mine can be reasonably well tested by our attitude in the presence of suf-

fering. Does it impel you most to detached reflection, or give you a desire to do something helpful? And if we have a desire to help, is it the *will* to help, or just the *wish*? If it be just the wish, it is not likely to amount to much. If it be the will, it is sure to take us to the heart of the difficulty. We will be moved to find out if God didn't mean that we, rather than someone else, should have the blessing of this service. It may be, in spite of its gravity and pain, a very simple case after all.

The verdict of society on much that it sees is, "It is a great pity." But who really feels the pity? If a single person had the pity, it might be all that was needed. But often it is so great a pity that no single person has enough. The case may be a little abandoned child. All that is wanted is one mother heart. But society says someone ought to suffer for abandoning this child, and begins to spend money, not on the child, but to apprehend the persons responsible for leaving it. Then the child gets sent to an orphan asylum, when all it needed was a mother. Just a mother! Why is it so much easier to get a home for a dog, sometimes, than for a child? If it be a great responsibility to take a child, isn't it a very much larger one to refuse to do so?

God grant to us to accept a helpful Gospel, a

Gospel with a heart and with hands, a Gospel full of the simple remedies of practical kindness. For such a life is full of the Saviour, and in it we will often meet more than in more ambitious seeking for truth: the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XV.—THE AUTHORITY OVER US.

*Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?—St.
Matt. 22:17.*

HE Jews in our Lord's time were completely under foreign domination, except that hardly any interference occurred in their worship. They had never, with all their intense national feeling, had more than a semblance of independence, except perhaps for a few months under Judas Maccabaeus, since before the first temple had been destroyed. Even under the Judean kings there had been successive tributes paid to Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. Then came the captivity and the restoration under the Persians, but that restoration to their own country brought no independence. Then came Alexander's conquest, and then the strifes between the dynasties of his successors, which made Judea the shuttlecock between Syria and Egypt, until just before the Romans

came. Then, after the Romans came, there was for a while the figment of a Jewish kingdom under the Edomite Herod. But his son was so impossible a ruler that, by the time the land was ready for the Gospel, there was a Roman governor there, and they "had no king but Caesar."

They hated Caesar, but they came to hate Christ more. They hated to be holy more than they hated to bow to Rome. And, as the first temple had to be destroyed because men filled it with idols while calling it a temple of Jehovah, so the last temple fell because it had been turned into "a den of robbers."

The Pharisees knew that the followers of our Lord were intensely patriotic. Galilee was always so. They knew that He had been preaching "the Kingdom of Heaven." They hoped that, if given occasion, He would come out openly, and deny the Roman authority. They had seen Pilate not long before mingle the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices. It would be easy to get him to act decisively against Christ, if suspicion could be aroused against Him. They themselves assumed a patriotic pose, so they joined the Herodians, at other times their opponents, in order, by words of flattering deference, to betray Christ into an unguarded word against the government. "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way

of God in truth; neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" Of course, this was entirely overdone. Part of it was not true. Christ does care for every man, and that is why He was impartial.

Our Lord not only knew their craft, but He showed them that He knew. He said, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money." So they brought Him a penny. The penny was a Roman coin. That it passed current as lawful money in the country was an evidence of the authority they were living under, and to which they really owed a great deal. Our Lord then asks them, "Whose is this image and superscription" on the coin? They answered, "Caesar's."

Then our Lord says, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." They had a coinage of their own for the purposes of the sanctuary.

This partly explains the presence of money-changers in the Temple; for they would have regarded the use of Roman money there as wrong. Our Lord shows that there would be no necessary conflict of duties until the Romans should try to claim what belonged to God and His sanctuary. If their worship were left free, the Jews might,

and ought to, respect the constituted authority. That the divine Providence might have made strangers lords over them, was abundantly showed in their history; and Roman lordship was distinctly better for them than some they had endured. Under the Empire, war never approached Judea until they themselves rebelled.

The early Christians remembered faithfully these words of Christ. They became the best citizens of the Empire. They paid their tribute, their taxes, obeyed the laws—all but one; and in the nature of things they could not have obeyed that. It was a law against secret societies, or meetings. The law was, undoubtedly, first passed against secret societies which practised abominable rites; but it seemed to apply to the Christians, who had no other way to meet except in private. And, in addition, the Christians would not render divine honors to Caesar. *That* they could not have done as Jews; they certainly could not as Christians. Nevertheless, they were the best and most law-abiding of citizens, and this was recognized with perplexity.

When the Christianizing of the barbaric world began, it was the Church that often made the State possible. England was one Church before it was one State, and the kings could hardly have governed without the Church. So England's

Church not only founded the State, but it preserved the national freedom. For the Great Charter was wrested from a would-be despot by the greatest prelate of his day.

In a great many European countries there is an Established Church, the meaning of establishment varying in many degrees. Some countries regularly pay the clergy. In England there is no State aid to the Church, and the Church does much more for the State than she in any sense receives; for the State does interfere unreasonably with her law.

Here we have no State Church, and cannot have; but we are free to follow our own consciences in religion. What can we say to our particular membership in behalf of the civil government? We can say there never was a government under which taxes, customs, and public obligations ought to have seemed more reasonable than here. We ought to do our civic duties with the utmost cheerfulness. And we can say that our duty to the State is adopted as *Christian* duty, even though the specific thing the State may ask of us, through her statutes, may never have been thought of before.

When St. Peter wrote, "Fear God, honor the king," he was not stating principles which were opposed. You honor "the king" (which word

generally states the supreme authority, no matter what the form of government under which you live), because "the powers that be are ordained of God." If you should take money to endow a church which you had made by defrauding the customs, you do not honor God at all. If you successfully evade taxation till you have enough money to endow a projected orphanage, you do not do good—you steal. There is a deplorable lack of conscience among our people about this relation to the State. People who are caught smuggling are not ashamed of themselves for smuggling, but ashamed of being caught. Our Lord makes the debt due Caesar *religiously* due.

Everything we get from the State ought to be accounted for. The State bestows the suffrage. Every right has a reciprocal duty. We owe that vote to the State. The State gives protection in various ways to the public health. We owe co-operation, even to our own loss and inconvenience, or else government would be impossible. We owe this to our neighbors as fellow-Christians. Good health is not only a blessing; it is a duty, as far as we can promote it.

The State gives us important safeguards in her judicial system. We owe our duty as jurors when drawn. It makes us roads; we must obey the laws of the road. But, alas, just to mention

sanitary regulations, road laws, speed laws, game laws, customs duties, smoke ordinances, is to raise in everyone's mind an immediate illustration of complete public indifference. This is not Christian. We should do these things for Christ's sake. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's."

Then our religious duties are much greater than we are accustomed to consider. Our dues to God can be related to claims upon our time, our belongings, and our personal services. We cannot do our duty toward God unless we do our duty toward our neighbor. It is not too much to say that most Christians fall far short of paying their religious dues in every one of these directions: time, money, and personal services.

Sundays are commonly rendered to the world, or pleasure. But the world never gave us Sunday; it was a clean gift from God. The world would never concede us a rest day. Without a visible Church we would not have had it. Without using it rightly, we are in danger of losing it. We do not really need a day to play, and if Sunday means just that everybody is idle, instead of religiously occupied, we cannot say there are not great dangers in having everybody idle at once.

Let any emphasis upon the giving of money be passed here, except for the appeal to find out how

much you really owe. It will take some time. Your debts will grow on examination. But the matter of personal service to God needs far more attention than we are apt to pay to it. Nothing can take its place where it is really due. Such duties are connected intimately with personality, which is a non-transferable thing. Our talents, our education, our tastes make us able to do things with a touch much needed, but which no one else has exactly. Hence we can not buy off our personal duties for a money compensation, and be relieved of higher responsibilities thereby.

The real friends of Christ, who ask that they may know, and not defeat His wisdom, will be alert about these things; for they find both privilege and duty best expressed in those words of our Eucharistic prayer: "Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, as a *reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice.*"

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XVI.—THE ERROR OF THE SADDUCEES.

In the Resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.—St. Luke 20:33.

HE Sadducees were, in our Lord's time, in control of the great offices and positions of the Jewish Church. The importance of the rival sect, the Pharisees, came from their influence on the people. The Sadducees had influence with the Roman authorities. They afford a curious illustration of how strangely we are constituted. How could men absolutely without spirituality, without even faith in spiritual realities, even desire to hold offices which lost their meaning if unspiritually exercised? But history duplicates this situation in the age of the Medicean Popes, when thorough-going skepticism was not at all uncommon among the highest ecclesiastics.

The Sadducees refused to recognize any of the old Scriptures except the Torah, or Law of Moses;

and you may remember that there is no explicit teaching about immortality in the Law. There are reasons why we do not expect to find it there. What the Sadducees did not observe was that the Law really took immortality for granted. Everybody in the Egypt from which the Israelites had escaped, believed in it, and the Law contains no contradiction of it; while it did contradict and oppose much that the Israelites had been used to during their bondage.

The main body of the Jews sided doctrinally with the Pharisees, though not all proceeded to their extremes, and were believers in the Resurrection. Martha's confession after the death of Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day," was made as a devout Jewess.

The Sadducees rejected all this. They believed in neither angel nor spirit; they admitted no resurrection. Never were men more out of place.

The question in the text was a manufactured one. Nothing of the kind ever happened. But they suppose a case where seven brothers in succession married the same woman, and all died childless, leaving the woman a seven-times widow. If there had been children by any of them, there would have been no subsequent marriage; and it

would have been another case. The question was put to our Lord for the sake of confusing Him, and also to show everybody that the Resurrection, if it could be believed in, would result in some cases in inextricable entanglements.

Our Lord's answer was very full and clear, and gives us larger detail about the Doctrine of the Resurrection than we get anywhere else. He said, "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage. But they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the Resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being children of the Resurrection." It really was worth while that a foolish question should be asked, for the sake of producing these words of our Lord, so full, and clear.

Then our Lord proceeds to refer the Sadducees back to those parts of the Old Testament which they recognized, and to show that immortality was taken for granted. He says, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the Bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him." And so He concludes, "Ye do therefore greatly err." They did not know, as He

said, either "the Scriptures, or the Power of God."

There is no such revelation of Heaven, and the life to come, as to answer all possible questions about the conditions there. We never needed such a revelation. If we have faith that God is perfectly good, just, kind, wise, powerful, our faith makes us happy in the prospect of Heaven. And then common sense comes in to tell us that any adequate description of Heaven could not be made to our present faculties. We would need to know the language of Heaven. What we can do is simply to have confidence that it will more than answer all possible expectations, be "exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think."

But nothing that our Lord said here justifies us in thinking that people who have been truly married have nothing to expect from reunion in the life to come. For, that the spiritual side of human relationships continues into the next world, can safely be asserted. If God give to a wedded pair here the mercy of coming to their golden wedding day, they have by that time left behind them a good deal that is earthly in their relationship. They have become brother and sister, two spiritually interpenetrating selves. They are more one than "one flesh" signifies. They have, however, such a relationship that it could be shared by more than two, for it has ceased to be after the

flesh; but it has become greatly precious. Indeed, it has become so precious that we cannot think it is meant to be terminated.

A young woman is happily wedded to a fitting mate. She becomes the mother of his children. They seem perfectly at one, and perfectly in love. He dies, and leaves her desolate. She thinks she will die of grief, but she doesn't. Their mutual dependence has been less than she supposed. But, let the same two go on together for fifty years, and then the "silver cord" which binds up life may be the same for both of them. They are no longer so dependent upon each other in the old sense, but more in a higher spiritual union. Nor is this less sweet. "All the world loves a lover," and the sweetness of "love's young dream" is proverbial. But do they quite express so high a reality as that charming old song, "John Anderson my jo?" An old wedding wish, "May you live together fifty years and die on the same day" has been more than a few times fulfilled.

God will surely bring together in a better world our friends of earth, without any of the troubles of earth. "Neither shall they die any more" says more than it seems to, for so many of the troubles of earth are just slow dying. Exterior relationships do not amount to much unless they go down deep, and call forth something in

the soul. And the deeper the source of things, the more permanent they seem to be, the more they seem to prophesy the realities of the “life of the world to come.”

He who gave us that picture of personal agency in future comfort, expressed by Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom; He who chose serving disciples, that He might advance them to friendship; He who, for the sake of a mother here or brethren there, raised from the dead those whom they had hopelessly mourned; He who was the Chief of Friends, more than Brother, who loved “His own unto the end,” is the Lord of the world to come. To Him, therefore, because He has been believed by us to be Author of all the Sweetness of this life, we dedicate ourselves in faith, looking, as into a vast but glowing distance, for the promise of the coming day, hoping not less for the reunions of Heaven than for its perfection.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XVII.—OUR LORD'S SELF-MANIFESTATION.

Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?—St. John 14: 22.



HIS is the solitary appearance of Jude in the Gospels, except in the mere lists of the Apostles. There were two Judases, two Simons, two Jameses. There were also three sets of brothers, and perhaps other relationships represented. Jude is believed to have been our Lord's cousin. There is nothing in this question to show cousinly intimacy. It is the question of a humble disciple. It is so simple that one almost feels at first that it was unnecessary to ask it; but it brought out a very full and sympathetic answer.

If the Epistle we have, that is called by St. Jude, is by the apostle, as we have most reasons for supposing, it seems to be a sort of echo of things said by St. Peter, except for one stirring clause: "Earnestly contend for the faith once de-

livered to the saints.” There are places where an echo is all that is needed, and a simple soul needs a simple teacher. So perhaps a great many people have needed our Lord’s answer just as it stands.

And the more Jude’s question is looked at, the more important it appears. We stand in great need of the manifestation of Christ. We read our Bibles, we go to church, we say our prayers; but do we feel, after all the time we have been in the Church, that we have really advanced in spiritual knowledge, that is, in personal knowledge of Christ? Isn’t St. Paul pretty bold according to your experience when he says, “I know whom I have believed?”

Now, as diffident Christians, we have a peculiar interest in our Lord’s answer. He says, “If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. And the word that ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.” In other words, this is God’s truth.

So, then, the chief key to a personal revelation is love. You will take no trouble to understand any person unless you can respect him, nor hold your interest if you do not like him. But if you heartily do like, respect and admire him, if you reverence his character, think of him as an inspiration and an example, you will not rest satis-

fied with any lower degree of intimacy than the most he is willing to grant.

Now Christ is disposed to grant to us a remarkable intimacy, so far as it is consistent with the reverential awe and admiration and obedience that we owe Him. We are not His equals, and cannot be. Yet He “will come in unto us and sup with us, and we with Him.” That intimacy, however, in this life has to be with an Invisible Friend. It has to be apprehended now by a different organ than sight, or by faith, and it is the office of the Holy Scriptures to help us do this. No parts of Holy Scripture are more helpful to us than the words of Christ Himself.

For have we not, after all, a very clear idea of what Christ was like? The portrait has been drawn in the mind. It was in his mind before any artist drew it, for we have no authentic portrait of the Saviour. We have, however, wonderful pen pictures of Him which, while they do not give one single feature, nevertheless give the whole. We cannot escape from the conviction that He is working through the ages, and that we have seen His work. We ask more than a realization of Christ as a historical Person. We do not enter into communion with historical personages. What we seek is the manifestation of the Living Christ,

and it is this which Christ really intended to promise.

For the way to realize Christ is to live the Christ life. Approach life in the way Christ did, approach another life in the way He did. Fix your eye on the personal need, the personal value of another man. Approach him with the unselfish idea of benefitting Him. Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, seek the prisoner and afflicted, and do this, not in a casual way of doing it, but with an honest desire to commune with Christ in action, to keep His commandments, and you are surely due to receive a revelation.

It is not possible to say that, with the best desire to do so, you may always recognize the revelation while it is present or coming. One of Christ's parables of the Judgment seems to postpone the realization of present facts until the very end has come. "Lord, when saw we Thee"? and this though He Himself states His presence through another. Nevertheless, it states those facts as facts. And the waiting for realization may not be so very long.

You remember that the walk to Emmaus was what we would call a long walk, but it did not take much time. It began with sorrowing thoughts and conversation between two friends, all about

Jesus. While the two were walking and talking, "Jesus Himself drew near." "But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." It was really Jesus, though. Their ears were fully open, too, and as they were going along with the stranger who knew so much about the Scriptures, they were filled to saturation with nothing but the spirit of the Messianic promises. These were being explained to them by the Incarnate Word Himself. They did not know it was He, but their hearts were burning. Then, with hearts and minds saturated with this foredrawn picture of their Lord, they sat down with the Man who had thus so wonderfully taught them. They could not let Him go. And as He broke the Bread, recognition flashed, and—He vanished. "They knew Him" and "He vanished!" How they must have wondered why He did not stay! Perhaps it was for something of the reason that St. Paul alludes to when he says, "though we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth know we Him (thus) no more."

Was it not true, therefore, that they had already entered upon the beginnings of the same problem that we have? He has vanished from us. Our eyes, too, are holden. But let us keep to His words. Let them flood our minds, let us take time to consider them, let us seek the Lord in the Break-

ing of Bread. That flash of recognition is, we believe, certain to come to us, and will not fail us when we need it most. It seems plain, though, that we are not intended to have it always, or much, but to find our communion in obedience. "We walk by faith, not by sight." But if it never comes before and we have been really faithful, by the testimony of many, it comes in the Valley of the Shadow.

Whether Stephen, the first martyr, really had ever seen Jesus it would be impossible for us to say. He was a Greek-speaking Jew. Perhaps he was one of those who came to Philip just before the last Passover, and asked to see Jesus. But it is not there said whether they saw Him or not. But there *did* come a time when Stephen was being stoned to death for his faithfulness to the testimony of Jesus, Saul of Tarsus looking on. And as death rushed upon him he said, "I see Jesus."

Lord, though our eyes be holden here, hold not back our hands and hearts from serving Thee; fill Thou our hearts with love for Thee. May all our desires and powers be Thine. And when we need Thee most, reveal Thyself and save us. For we are Thine.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XVIII.—OUR OWN DUTY FIRST.

Lord, and what shall this man do?—St. John 21:21.

 E are very much indebted to Simon Peter for the questions he asked. They were not always wise, but, though they sometimes were rebuked, they always elicited important truth. We all ask such questions, even if we do not ask them of any one in particular, or ask aloud. We have them in our hearts.

Thanks, no doubt in part, to our Lord's wise answers to his impulsive questions, we observe that the Peter of the Acts of the Apostles is a different character, though the same person as the Simon Peter of the Gospels. The other disciples knew him perfectly well, defects and all. Is it not strange that, after hearing him rebuked so many times, and knowing all about his three-fold denial, they yet should afterward have accepted him as a conspicuously leading man among them? May it not have been a sort of confession on their part,

that they felt they were just like him on the inside? They didn't ask all his hasty questions, but they might have done it if he hadn't. Our thoughts are really registered as actions in the sphere of thought. "As a man thinketh, so is he."

The conversation of which this question was a part was, in a way, a private conversation. The occasion was that second miraculous draught of fishes which introduces Peter's restoration, and the question comes in, as soon as that restoration was complete. They were possibly barely more than aside from the others, and John seems to have overheard a good deal, or all of what was said. But he did not intrude into the conversation. And he and Peter were always so much together that his presence would not have seemed intrusive. John probably rejoiced inwardly over Peter's restoration, and the words "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep."

So solemn and searching were our Lord's questions, so piercing the repetition of "Lovest thou Me?" that one would think it would have kept Peter quiet for a while. But the force of a great thought sometimes brings a momentary sort of rebound. So Peter has hardly received his absolution and his new commission before he thinks of John. He turns and sees him following, and asks the question, "What shall this man do?"

The question was not quite so unnatural as it would have been if Peter were not so used to being and acting in company with John, but still it was improper. We can do much for our friends, but we must not do too much; we can not enter upon their responsibilities, or have their deep experiences. You have to let a man be as much of a man as you can, and decide for himself what it is his to do.

So our Lord's answer plainly indicates to Peter the intrusive character of his question. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Peter was not the sort of man to conceal what was said to him, the reproofs any more than the commendation. So this saying was a good deal talked about, and gave rise to the impression among some of the disciples that St. John would not die; in other words, would be still alive when the Saviour returned to judgment.

But, though John was preserved to a very advanced age, and wrote his Gospel when he was very old, he apparently had no expectation himself of not sharing the common lot. He had his own calling, his own experiences, his own work. This is the case with everyone of us. We have responsibilities about our brethren, but no considerations about *their* duty should relieve us from seriously and attentively considering our own. Christ says

in effect to each of us when we are mourning over unsatisfactory conditions in the world, or the Church, the lack of workers, the infrequency of full consecration, "Follow thou Me!"

If you were the only person in the community who seemed to be realizing vocation, the call to help, you might still more limit the amount of good you could do by wasting your active time in lamenting the fewness of the workers. It is often a fatal temptation. You might think the little you could do not worth doing if there were no other at work. But this is not the case.

So we come to this clear point: no matter how young or old you are, how rich or poor, however large or small your endowments, duty is a personal matter between you and Christ. This does not mean that we have not duties in which we may have to take the commands of others, but even then our responsibility goes back to Christ. There is nothing to discourage our direct prayers or appeals. As far as your personal duty, your personal need is concerned, though the sympathetic knowledge of other disciples may be a help, it is just as much between you and Christ alone as it was between Him and St. Peter.

What our duty, full duty, to Christ is, what it may become, we are never in a position to know clearly until we have advanced some way toward

the love of Christ. You can't trust people to act for you, if they do not understand your mind and intention. Their usefulness to you depends upon their fitness to be trusted. To be sure, God makes some use even of people who do not serve Him willingly; but this is not the sort of work that Christians ought to do for Christ. No commission came to Peter until the threefold question had pierced his heart so deeply, and brought forth his confession of love. As God knew his heart, and without deception, Peter could say that he loved Christ.

Doubtless, he had thought before this many times that he loved the Master. He had even made some sacrifices for Him, but he had not then loved Him enough to overcome his fears of what might happen to him if he had confessed Christ in the High Priest's palace. When we really love Christ, following Him will be seen not to be wholly for our own sakes. It is for the sake of Christ's lambs and sheep. We are not all apostles, but every Christian needs a Shepherd heart.

In the beginnings of the Gospel the Good Shepherd is represented as going out alone to bring in the lost sheep. But there are many lost. And we are so made and constituted that, with everyone of us, there is probably some person in the world over whom we are likely to have more

influence than has anyone else. A child can often do more with and for a playmate than the mother can. So to everyone in his degree, and as far as love makes him able to serve, Christ gives not only food and grace, but a command to share it; and when He commands us to follow, He gives us to some degree to lead men to Him.

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XIX.—THE GOSPEL TO ABRAHAM.

Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?—St. John 8:57.



HIS question voiced the great astonishment of the Jews at the saying of our Lord, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” Our Lord was before them, plainly a young man, as we know, little more than thirty, but probably estimated as older from the gravity and intensity of His life. Still, how could a man fifty years old have seen Abraham? Our Lord’s answer was, “Before Abraham was (born), I Am.”

Then astonishment gave place to wrath, and they took up stones to cast at Him, while He eluded them.

You will notice two things in this answer: that He there asserted His own præexistenee, and also used, as appears, what the Jews considered the Incommunicable Name. This apparently was what roused their wrath most.

In order to look at this supposed knowledge of Christ by Abraham, let us consider the patriarch himself.

He was brought up in Ur of the Chaldees, a great city of which, we suppose, the remains have been found; but he may have gone there first from southern Arabia. A worshipper of One God, he was impelled by a Divine message to leave Ur, which was given over to a complicated idol and nature worship, and went first north to Haran taking some of his kindred with him, not all of them, however, sharing his pure monotheism; and then, afterward, by a second call of God, and taking only his nephew Lot, he goes to the land of Canaan. There he was a stranger, and lived as a wanderer. He mixed little with the people, though maintaining peace with them. The chapters of Genesis which describe his life are also a history of his religious development.

His thoughts of God are shown in the Names he called Him. The religion of the Hittites and Canaanites around him was also idolatrous, an elaborate, cruel, and impure nature worship. In the face of that, and in spite of the idolatry of Ur, he had arrived at the belief that God was One, that He was Almighty—for that is the meaning of El Shaddai; that He was Supreme—for that was the signification of El Elyon—or, in other

words, the Most High; that He was Everlasting; that He was the Righteous Judge of all the earth; that He was merciful—witness the faith shown in the prayer of Sodom; that He was the Faithful Promiser and Covenant Keeper; that He held communion with man through angels and sacrifices; that, out of Abraham's own family, perpetuated in a miraculous way through the birth of Isaac, God was going to bless all nations, even though the patriarch felt moved to make a sacrifice of that very son who had been given him by promise.

The Name given the Eternal Son before the Incarnation was the Word. That the Word of God came unto Abraham, no Christian would deny. That one of the angelic visitors who came to Abraham spoke words as if directly out of the mouth of God, all devout readers have observed. And, finally, the fact that Abraham believed that the sacrifice of his only begotten son was right, and not a defeating of the promise that all the world should be blessed through him, draws our attention closer to that marvellous drama on Mount Moriah, with all its prophetic details of the later sacrifice of One of Isaac's seed, God's only Begotten, given by His own Heavenly Father.

Recall the journey from the place where Abraham begins to ascend the mount of sacrifice. His

son is bearing the wood, as later Christ carried on foot the wood of the cross. When Isaac, innocent of the father's intention, asks where the lamb is, Abraham says prophetically, "God will provide Himself a lamb." And, at the supreme moment, when the sacrifice is fulfilled in will, and the voice of the angel has arrested it, then the lamb was found, caught in a thicket by its horns, symbol of the crown of thorns, manifold type of the sacrifice of Calvary.

Then came from heaven by the angel's voice the fuller proclamation of blessing to the world in Abraham's seed, a promise which was glad tidings, which was a gospel, perhaps more deeply understood by Abraham than we now suppose.

Wonderful faith of Abraham! Not one of the nations around believed in an Almighty God. All their gods had specialties, the powers of nature were divided between them. Not one of them had a really Supreme God, for none of them could alter fate. Not one of them had an Everlasting God, for all the gods in every ancient Pantheon were the offspring of Time. And none of the gods was righteous. We recognize the God of Abraham as our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: that Abraham had communion with Him, and was in covenant with Him; and, because no man cometh unto the Father except through the Son,

therefore Abraham must have seen the day of Christ.

The Jews had forgotten much of Abraham's faith. They were careless of that ancient Gospel that foresaw and exulted in the blessing of all nations; they did not realize that the true children of Abraham would show Abraham's character, and partake of his spirit, and share his faith. They could not recognize a Messenger of God when they saw him. They could not bow their wills, and so they charged the Truth Himself with blasphemy, and turned from the Living God to serve the idols of their hearts and minds.

What mysterious gift may yet have been Abraham's after his death we do not know. But from our Lord's parable, where He speaks of Lazarus being "carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom," there must have been some high place, some special light provided for him in Paradise. Father of hospitality, father of courtesy, father of worship, father of the faithful; we are proud, as were the Jews, to call ourselves after his name. But if we are Abraham's seed, we must do the works of Abraham and thus prove our sonship. We must not take our privileges selfishly as the Jews did, we must not be content to over value our race, our communion and fellowship, and fall into the

bondage of pride, but remember the intercessory life, and our duty to our neighbors.

The only absolute proof of sonship is character, the family character. One of our Bishops once went to a large south-eastern city to preach a series of sermons. After several sermons had been preached, an officer in the army, who had his station there, was stopped every few days by strangers, who, with Southern civility, would ask him when he was going to preach again. When he said that he hadn't preached at all, and was not expecting to at any time, his questioners were entirely mystified. At the same time the Bishop was being given the military salute. It was not so much of a mystery after all; they were brothers. They had lived more than thirty years apart, but—they looked like their father.

Let us endeavor to show that, wherever we are, we are one family in the faith. If we be Abraham's seed, let us do the works of Abraham.

"The God of Abraham praise,
Who sits enthroned above,
Ancient of Everlasting Days
And God of Love.
Jehovah, great I AM,
By earth and heaven confessed.
We bow and bless Thy Sacred Name
Forever blessed."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XX.—THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?—Acts 1: 6.

UR Lord's Apostles were devout men, but they were patriotic Jews. They shared the intense distress of all the best of their race at the domination of the heathen over them. They had hoped that the new King who had been proclaimed would only have to wait a little while before His spiritual work would have prepared His people once more to lift up their heads among the nations. Of course, unspiritual men, zealous Jews, would not have seen any need to postpone the coming of the visible kingdom.

Christ might probably have had a great following if He had been willing to ascend a temporal throne first, unprepared for by righteousness. But the history of Judah would have shown the futility of that. Hezekiah was a good king, but

his reign checked but a little while the national apostasy. Josiah was, perhaps, the best king Judah had, but his early death was perhaps the most merciful thing that could have happened to him; for his people were bad, and the Scripture says "there was no remedy," except the lessons to be learned through captivity.

So Christ said nothing to encourage those who looked for glorious visible results from His first coming. When the Pharisees asked when the kingdom was coming He answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," that is, as the margin gives it, "with outward show." For, He adds, "The Kingdom of God is within you." There is where the kingdom must first be; afterward it will be time enough to talk about a royal progress through the world.

He knew perfectly well that there would be progress by the infant Church, but it would not achieve a national reformation. So far from that, the people go from bad to worse, until destruction would once more have to be visited upon Jerusalem.

So, when the disciples ask Him just before His ascension, if, now that He had conquered death, He could not restore the kingdom—a question possibly not unconnected with frail ambitions—He decisively puts the question aside. His disciples will have work enough, and they will

have power enough, after the few days that He bids them wait; and on the coming down of His Promise, "they shall be witnesses unto Him both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

This answer must have both disappointed and excited the disciples. For, though it postponed the coming in of the visible kingdom of Christ, it certainly did give a most wonderful horizon to the field of the Church's progress. The widest extent of Israel's empire in Solomon's peaceful days bore no sort of resemblance or comparison with empires such as had been seen after him, and had treated Judea as only an insignificant province. But Christ announces that the kingdom was to begin to come, if they could understand Him, as soon as His testimony could begin to be spread, all over the world at once; and slowly, very slowly, the faith, the intelligence, and the conscience of the Church began to respond to His idea.

"The Kingdom of God is within you." This was, and is, fundamental. Perhaps it should be translated, "The Kingdom of God is in your midst." But, carefully considered, this makes no great difference. The growth of Christ's kingdom begins quietly through testimony. Its great characteristic is holiness. In every holy man Christ is King. Where two or three are gathered

in the Name of Christ, where holiness has spread from one life to two, and from two to three, there the kingdom had grown. Old dynasties might crawl down slowly into the grave, and be replaced by newer ones, and all the time, through testimony, through conversion, through the victory of faith in individual lives, the body of the people might be almost unconscious of their earthly allegiance, though acquiescent in it, because the thought of all was constantly uplifted to God the King above. The laws would begin to be taken differently, the movement of the people to be like that of a brotherhood and a family. Each man would govern himself by the laws of God, and the love of the brotherhood. There need be no setting up of an earthly throne, from which the armies of the Son of David should go forth, as those of Mohammed did afterward, to reduce a world to an unwilling allegiance; but the armies of peaceful men would go forth without observation, and in time transform the world through an inward principle, so that, no matter who sat upon the earthly thrones, the kingdoms of the world should become "the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

The throne of the Ascended Lord is fixed in the heavens. Is there any doubt of the reality of His reign over ever vaster regions? That much remains for the heavenly conquest, though many

of this world's potentates can hardly be said to reign for Christ, yet it has come to pass that hardly any one can reign without Christ. Those who fail, in any high sense, to represent Him, do not dare rule without Him. And the visible power of His will is seen in many places where He is not owned at all.

"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons." There seems no doubt that the first Christians did really expect an early return of Christ, and a visible reign after that return. The apostles note first that some of the new converts looked for this too soon, and that, what seemed like delay, shook the faith of some; but they themselves never wavered in believing the return and the victory sure, while they never ventured to set the day.

Their work was joy enough. They knew that they had the power promised by our Lord before He ascended. They went on with their witness, the witness of truth and the witness of character. They wrought from time to time their signs as had been promised. They confided in the wisdom of the Master. They recognized that the work they were doing was His work, that He still worked; that His work before His Ascension was just a beginning; it was what He "Began to do and teach." And so, if there were any apparent

delay, what were they, that they should think God unwise or weak?

The past hundred years has seen a great approximation of nations governed on apparently different methods toward the same ideals. England is a monarchy, a constitutional monarchy, as it is called, but it is really a congeries—that is, the Empire is—of allied republics. The power is in the people with them, as much as with us, and, owing to the more flexible character of their constitution, sometimes it seems to us that the people can register their will there more easily than here, though we are nominally what they are not. Parliamentary ideas have elsewhere made great progress. And there has been growth toward international ideas. A common thought has mitigated many of the horrors of war through societies like the Red Cross. Arbitration has made great strides. Nations, as such, seem to have more of a public conscience. We do not say that we are satisfied. We do not think the cause of mercy, of truth, of peace, of health, all of which are related to the cause of Christ, moves fast enough. But it moves. And we ought to be stirred to co-operation with “every good word and work.”

But we do not want Christ’s kingdom to appear too much like a world power, or too soon. So we have to keep constantly returning to the

real centres of His power among us. His power is in life, and must be, before it is in law. The Roman empire was Christian before it was declared so. The transition was only recognized after it came. That is, Christianity had already become the strongest governing force. But, just as soon as the empire accepted it openly, the spiritual power of Christianity began to decline. We want no victories too easily. There will be no kingdom until we are all fit to reign, and are actually reigning over ourselves. It does not exalt character to put it on a throne. If it is what it ought to be, it needs no proclamation.

Thus, if Christ rules over the world increasingly, it must be through the fact that His servants maintain their testimony, and show the force of the Ascension in themselves; that they "in heart and mind" have themselves ascended, and live here below as in the fellowship of the King; walking with their feet indeed on the ground, but treading in Christ's footsteps; and realizing that Kingship and the kingdom were never more triumphantly vindicated than when Pilate asked the suffering Man before him, "Art Thou a King then?" and was answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth."

HUMAN QUESTIONS AND DIVINE ANSWERS

XXI—THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF MARRIAGE.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?—St. Matt. 19:3.



EVERYTHING in the law of Moses was regarded by the Pharisees as the perfection of enactment, even where there was plainly a need for an advance upon it. There was a divorce law there which they hoped, by asking this question, to use in showing a contradiction between Christ and the great Lawgiver, which would hurt Christ with devout people. But our Lord answered them by an appeal from Moses to Moses; an appeal from an enactment made to meet and mitigate a heartless and unhappy custom which had grown up, to the history recorded by Moses of man's origin and essential character. "In the beginning it was not so." Divorce does not enter into the ideal.

Before the Exodus, under the intolerable conditions of Egyptian bondage, and largely through the wrong of slavery, men had become addicted

to light separations. It had become common for men to send their wives away whenever they tired of them. A woman, turned adrift in this way, was in a most pitiable position. Moses had to intervene in many particulars to soften the lot of women. And this regulation about "a writing of divorcement" was not intended to facilitate divorce, but, in some way, to protect the woman who was sent away, often without her fault. If she had such a writing, it gave her some sort of legal status. If a woman went away of her own accord, that was another matter.

The conditions of life in old times seem to have been such that, if a woman left her husband voluntarily, she left to go to another man. This would put her entirely outside the law. There was no provision for life apart from organized families. A woman had to be either with one man, or another. If she were *driven* away by cruelty, that is, not *told* to go but *forced* to go, of course that entitled her to compassion; but it would not generally alter the fact that she would have to go to another man. This is what our Lord meant when He said that, when a man put away his wife, he caused her to commit adultery. If a woman went away deliberately therefore, without compulsion of any kind, this was therefore because she purposed to go to someone else, and would

therefore be unfaithful in her heart before she left. If a law could have been always enforced against such, she would have been punished with death for such behavior; but then it could not always be enforced.

In our Lord's answer here He goes back to first principles, by showing that, on any fair consideration of the purpose of the Creator in instituting marriage, *Divorce ought not to be*. In any fair study of the question we ought, as Christians, to begin with God's evident declared purpose. Let the details of any particular case rest until we have this firmly fixed in our minds, Divorce ought not to be. A firm grasp of this by our civil judges, who are given some discretion in certain cases where they may or may not grant divorces, would prevent them from acting lightly. Let them put alongside the question, "Is it lawful?" that other question, "Would this be right?" For law and right are not always as close as they should be.

The constitution of our nature tells us a good deal about the purposes of God for us. We think we are the crown of the animal creation. We are more than that; we are certainly not less than that. We are all persuaded that we are the highest of the creatures, but we must have reasons for so considering. What do we mean by "high," or

"higher?" Man's logical faculty demands the answer. Considering ourselves from the animal side, we need animal reasons. We say some animals are high, and some low. What makes them high or lower?

There would have to be the consideration of many details before we could get that question fully answered, but here is something we would have to take into account. It would be impossible for us not to regard animals that remain with their mates as, in that respect, higher than those that do not. We are formed mentally to admire fidelity. A mating, therefore, that continued through a whole season, in which the male helped provide for his offspring, seems to mark a higher animal than where the male, like some of the cat family, is dangerous to his offspring. If the mating lasted beyond a season, from one year to another, that would mark still higher things.

Now the need of the male as a provider increases with the length of the time the young are helpless. It is plainly greatest in man. Man has the greatest natural reason for faithfulness beyond a single season, as the dependence of his children lasts until there may have been several successive births following each other. For the man to forsake his dependent offspring is a crime against his species, unless you can suppose it would be

more natural for a stranger to care for them, which is absurd. And woman cannot be expected to care for them alone.

A mother-hen has chicks who can begin to pick up their own food, can run alone the day they are hatched. All they need is brief shelter, hovering and defence. The hen is entirely free of one brood before she has another. The hen does not need a consort to help her except occasionally to fight an enemy, and the male, though polygamous, is never far away.

A mother-robin has to find food as well as give shelter, so she needs a faithful consort; but she is also free of one brood before she has another. She only needs the male as long as the young are nestlings; nevertheless, her instinct of faithfulness lasts beyond the single brood.

The mother-woman is described in the prophecy, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrows and thy conception." So far from being free from her first care before the second comes, the first child needs more care as a little toddler than when it is in her arms. It can walk, but walk into danger; it can eat, but eat dangerous things. And at the very time it is thus needy, the coming of the second child robs the mother of some of her strength and quickness to help.

So the physiology of the race demands that

the man should remain true. Leave morals out. It is Nature that demands faithfulness. And by the time the childbearing period is completed, any reasonable couple simply could not separate. It is too late, unless death has intervened, to begin new relationships. This shows itself among those animals we most admire. Those which *could* change mates, and sometimes do, often remain faithful through successive seasons, and show clear signs of something that looks like love. When we see cases like this there is an immediate outflow of sympathy. Our heart approves. Simply then, regarding man as the highest of the animals, Divorce ought not to be, for the sake of the children.

As the stability of marriage is demanded for the sake of the children, it is plain that children are the governing reason for marriage. A deliberately childless marriage is unnatural, and a perversion of nature. It is entirely an invention of our own, and is "earthly, sensual," and careful, scheming selfishness. This also has a Bible name.

A generally accepted statement would be that the law of our American Church on the subject of divorce has been growing in strictness. But this is not correct. The Church has no law about divorce at all. She cannot divorce people. All she knows about it is that God did not intend it;

Christ deplored it. We have a law of Marriage, not a law of Divorce. It is the State that divorces, and the State is thereby busy in overthrowing her own foundations, for she is founded on the family. Overthrow the family, and you get anarchy.

Part of our marriage law has been made, however, in consequence of the acts of the State. We have to enquire as to the right of persons divorced by the State to marry again in the lifetime of the other party. Here is where the Church's discipline has been growing more strict, as she has more and more recurred to her fundamental principle, Divorce ought not to be.

Marriage is now apparently looked upon by "emancipated women," as they are queerly styled, as a sort of bondage. What has gone before shows that it really saves her from abandonment. She must have children; her heart demands them; she is not fully blessed without them. But if she has them she needs help. Christian marriage makes her safe. Even Moses' apparently lax regulation was in her interest, as against a worse custom. But now, alas, it is the woman who is often attacking her own purity and safety. Woman's purity is her crown. We have been taught to revere her. It is not woman, then, but pure Man, our Lord Himself, whom we must listen to, to understand our duties.

Let us state a typical divorce case in its history. The facts answer to conditions in hundreds of cases.

Mrs. X. is not altogether happily married, nor altogether unhappily; but she is selfish, badly taught, and does not know that love has no promise of continuance unless it is real, and therefore self-sacrificing. Mr. X. is just like his wife. Up to this point the situation can be saved by giving it a religious turn. Neither has yet been unfaithful, nor yet fully devoted. Neither has fully realized what Christian marriage really is.

Mr. X. begins to flirt, for it is always easy to find somebody to flirt with. Mrs. X. observes, and her cure for the situation is to revenge herself by herself engaging in a flirtation. Neither thinks of the soul of the other, or of his own. There is no awakening of conscience. Finally Mrs. X. gets caught by the superior attractiveness of "the other man." It would never do to put herself in the wrong publicly, so she draws back from her husband, offering him nothing, in hopes that in his estrangement he may go too far, and she may get evidence against him that will entitle her to a divorce as the "innocent party." Then she will be in a position to marry the man she prefers. Is she innocent?

Or, if you are offended at supposing this of

any woman, begin again with Mr. X. Let the man plan the divorce, neglect his wife, goad her into impossible situations, lower her sense of delicacy by coarseness in word and deed, throw her with others until she falls, then let him sue for a divorce as the "innocent party." Is he innocent? Sit down if you think so, and try to write what the devil would really be like. Such a statement of facts as either of these could be duplicated in real life a hundred times over.

No person is "innocent" in the mind of the Church, who, before a divorce has even contemplated and planned marriage with another. Unfaithfulness in heart is just unfaithfulness, nothing else. And divorces which are amicably agreed upon between married people, either of them having a second marriage in view, are a deliberate wickedness, which our courts are constantly sanctioning against the clear law of the land. For collusion vitiates all proceedings of this kind.

God help us, as Christians, to take Christ's view as law for us, whether it is hard, in any case, or not. Christianity has the same thing to say to everybody, married or single, "No cross, no crown."

THE SHADOW OF PETER

They brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.
—Acts 5:15.

HE large and immediate influence gained by our Lord's Apostles over the dwellers in Jerusalem so soon after they began preaching the Gospel of the Resurrection, is worthy of very close attention. Any multitude, as a multitude, is more easily swayed than are a few, and who has not felt the pull and draw of a great crowd in action? But if the crowd be hostile to begin with, then the work is very hard.

Now it has been said that those who formed the shouting chorus at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem were the same people as those who, five days afterward, cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" This, however, can hardly be

more than sketchily true. There may have been a few of the same people among the class most easily influenced. But the procession which cried "Hosanna!" was largely composed of Galileans, and other visitors at Jerusalem most favorable to Christ; while those who cried "Crucify Him!" were, more than probably, people who were under the closer influence of the chief priest. Still it is easy to be carried away.

Then it is worth noticing that, even where men are drawn into a movement by reasons rather than impulses, the reasons need not at first be of the highest. Partial reasons may give place to higher ones. It is inconceivable that our Lord's disciples can have had the same full reasons for obedience when He first said, "Follow Me," as afterward, when He gave the same command to Peter at the Sea of Galilee, after His resurrection.

Those who heard Peter's Pentecostal sermon were, doubtless, as many were converted on that occasion, in a state of some preparation. Their minds were like fuel, ready laid for the match to be applied. And there were so many of these first converts that there must soon have been an enkindling effect on slower minds. And this influence must have grown, day by day, with the miracles of healing, of which the one wrought by

Peter and John upon the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple was probably no more remarkable, except in its immediate publicity, than some of the others. We may suppose it to have been given as a type. It was, in its wonder and grandeur, like some of our Lord's miracles, and impressed the people just as much. But our Lord's miracles were done in the power of His own Person, and those of Peter and John were wrought in His Name.

It is not likely that those in need of help, submerged in the great mass of suffering which then, more than now, probably abounded, at first clearly made this discrimination. They would be more interested in deliverance than in the precise method, and probably gave Peter some of the glory which belonged to God.

But, equally with that man who was born blind, and healed by our Lord, they would have scouted the idea that beneficent works could come from sinners. The influence of the Gospel, and of the preachers of the Gospel, is meant to grow through good works. This is the beginning of the story of modern missionary success. It is hospitals, homes, the children who have been saved, the women who have been comforted, and rescued, that have opened the hearts of China and of India to the Gosped. These things are the more im-

pressive in the foreign field because it is easy to see there that Christian hospitals were, at first, the only hospitals. Over here it is not always clear without thought, and a mental survey of history, that there would have been no modern philanthropy without an underlying Christianity.

The sacred narrative does not say how much good was done by the shadow of Peter; it *does* say that his influence was so great that, while naturally his time and his personal attention had to be limited, it was *believed* that he could do good without bestowing a look or a word, without knowing the persons to be benefitted. And it seems far from impossible that this might have been the case. At first the beginnings of many a cure are grounded in hope. And this hope is powerfully helped by the belief that God cares, and "has visited His people." Many cures are wrought by doctors in spite of their medicines. They need a healing will, quite as much as knowledge of medicine. And this is no modern discovery. It is not beyond the possibilities that Peter's shadow may have healed people that Peter himself would not have known how to heal. The clergy have often done good to the sick and afflicted by sympathetic visitation until they began to talk; then, sometimes, naturally, they blundered.

A true story is told of a quiet clergyman, large-

hearted but not otherwise remarkable for talent, who was minister of a plain little mission in a crowded, poor neighborhood in a large western city. Of course there was the usual large foreign element, not very accessible to us, and the unapproachableness of many others, which is one of the bitter fruits of separatism among Christians. He had a great deal to do, but he had the will to do more than seemed possible. His fundamental thought was to spread the blessing of God. He was observed to be a good deal on the streets, and not often on the same streets. He rarely travelled the same way twice in succession from his lodgings to his mission. He became a very familiar and much respected figure on the streets of the whole district, known and observed by hundreds of people who had no immediate connection with his church.

He was asked curiously about these perambulations, and answered that he got the idea from the "shadow of Peter." There was not an atom of conceit or self-assertion in his make-up. But he felt that he was known to be somebody besides himself, in other words, "a man of God." When people saw him they thought instantly of the Church, of the Christian ministry, perhaps of God; superficially, perhaps, but superficial thoughts sometimes introduce deeper ones. It is

no small thing to know when we see a man that he is wholly occupied in proving God's good will toward men, himself doing good as far as his knowledge and strength go, being inwardly moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

It was a characteristic saying of Bishop Joseph Butler, "Things are what they are; and their consequences will be what they will be." If we are good, it isn't necessary that we should say anything about it. Nor is it necessary that we should be highly placed, or highly talented. Very quiet persons are often allowed to get into closer contact with their neighbors than those who make a louder appeal for notice. They do not disturb or bump corners. And when you get close to people they know whether you are good or not, because good people are consistently self-forgetful, and consistently kind. And kindness, meekness, gentleness—what a large part of nursing they are! And they are not "born of the flesh."

When Peter and John restored the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, you remember what Peter's words were: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." Philanthropy now is so connected with great givers, astonishing benefactions, that the private man is awed. Anything he can possibly do seems so insignificant. And yet the thought of the world is not altogether clear

about these tremendous benefactions; for there is no note of self-sacrifice about them. Nor could they be put into actual effect without the quiet assistance of thousands of faithful and devoted lives. The world will never outgrow the need of the “cup of cold water” personally administered, or the touch of a sympathetic hand. There is need just where we are, and the need is of something in personality. Not by expecting great things at first, and being dashed by failure into hopelessness of doing any good, is our influence to be effected. Knowledge of our weakness is incomplete knowledge; for God is strong enough, and we must know that, too. If we only “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” then “we are what we are,” and our effects in our sphere “will be what they will be.”

And quiet goodness reaps, even in this life, an exceedingly comfortable reward. Children are very safe judges. The men and women who draw children are apt to be pretty safe company for anybody. The arms of little children bring great comfort as they cling to those they trust. And how often the true friend, who has neither talent or eloquence, has the reward of standing by in such words as “I like to have you around.”

We see, then, that our character is not merely

our own affair. God meant us to carry and spread His light, and there are dark places under the stairs, and behind the door, where a candle can be carried, but the moonlight will not reach.

It is impossible to limit closely the quiet effects of character. Many a one is often deeply influenced by people very little known to him. The brave bearing of a burden, the sanctifying of an almost impossible home, the evidence of true charity and forgiveness, the absolute patience of some few people with what we call "chronic" and unimproving cases of dependency, give us wordless comfort, wordless admonition every day, where there has been no thought of influencing us particularly. But such people must think a great deal about serving God.

And thus, as God gave the magnet drawing power, and the wind its cooling touch, and the violet its fragrance though it cannot speak, so He has given us our shadows, the unconscious reach of our influence. In the high noon of life the shadow looks small, for our conscious activity is then so high, and absorbs our thought. But when we cannot do so much that seems to count, it may comfort us to observe that in the early morning and the late afternoon the shadows draw long. So may the untainted, unconscious sweetness of childhood transform many a household, and so may

God perhaps throw far behind us the shadowing reach of a holy life, as the sun goes down.

One cannot avoid the thought, too, that the strange companion, the shadow always sticking so close to us, brings to mind the guardian angel God sends to minister *to* us, by ministering *for* us, and thus fulfilling our really strongest desire.

FRAGRANT SERVICE

She hath done what she could.—St. Mark 14:8.



THE pious act of Mary of Bethany, in anointing our Lord with the precious spikenard a few days before His Passion, must not be confused with the anointing performed by the unnamed woman, who was “a sinner,” in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, as described in the seventh chapter of St. Luke.

It is true that both anointings were done in the house of a man named Simon, but this by no means identifies the two Simons as the same person. There were two Simons, even among the twelve Apostles, and the name was extremely common. All the other details were different. Mary anoints the Saviour’s head; the other woman His feet. The objector in one case was Judas Iscariot, in the other the host himself. Simon objected, not so much to the act of anointing, as

to the character of the woman who was doing it. But the objection made by Judas, in the house of the other Simon at Bethany, was against the wastefulness of the anointing. The ointment ought to have been sold and given to the poor, or, that was what he claimed, though insincerely. He could not have objected to the person doing it, for she was the daughter of the house.

The value of the ointment was very great; it is given as three hundred pence. This, of course, on the face of it tells us very little until by comparison with another scripture—our Lord's parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard—we learn that a penny was considered a fair day's wage in harvest time, when laborers were naturally in great demand. Reckoning out Sabbaths, it would have taken a man a full year to earn three hundred pence, and of course a good many years to save such a sum. It would be counted a small fortune, and this was what was lavished upon our Lord in an instant.

Hearing such an objection as that of Judas stated, there are hundreds who at first blush would be inclined to think he was right; so it is worth while to look into the matter carefully.

Is the gift of money to the poor absolutely the best use that can be made of it? Our Lord did not seem to think so; and yet He certainly cared

for the poor as we do not. He intimates clearly that we have plenty of opportunities for helping the poor, and that what is lacking generally is not so much the power to help them as the will. And as we may easily lack the money to help them when we are asked for it, our Lord's statement, that we may do good to them whenever we will, seems to indicate that the best help we can give them may not be money at all.

We may soothe ourselves sometimes by giving money where it isn't really asked, and is not the true remedy. What may be needed is an investigation, to show how to help the poor man earn a better living, and save his self-respect, one of his most precious treasures. Then, too, we have no right to give in so-called charities money, though we call it our own, if it really is due elsewhere. Something certainly must be due to God, from whom, first, all good things come. There is plenty of money for everyone if it were distributed right, but no one knows how to do that. An even distribution would hardly do unless virtue could also be evenly distributed.

If the ointment was not to have been poured out on Christ, what would have become of it, anyhow? Ointment cannot be used for any purpose except one. If it were sold for money to be given away, that would simply put the ointment into

other hands. It must still ultimately be used, if at all, to anoint some other person less worthy to enjoy its fragrance, or to be honored so signally. The maker of it had been paid already, and Mary put its beautiful fragrance at the disposal of the Author of all beauty and fragrance; and all the guests shared it, nor did its odor soon pass away. The fragrance lingers yet, as our Lord said it would, in the story that tells of it. Then, too, if we consider the needs of poverty, our Lord Himself was the typical Poor Man, the representative of all holy poverty. Things done for the poor are always done for Him, if done in the right spirit. If we give them thought enough, respect enough, love enough, sympathy enough, we will find that they, too, would almost rather have precious ointment than bread; for they have hearts and souls to be satisfied, as well as the bare needs of the body. On the other hand, nothing done for Christ is ever really taken away from the poor. All beautiful things given to churches minister indirectly to the poor.

But Mary was specially commended by our Lord because her service of God went to the limit of her powers. How many there are who are doing *some* good, but doing it in a complaining way, as if they were doing too much! They would never have wasted any ointment upon Christ.

They certainly do not and cannot appreciate the blessedness of giving, because "The Lord loveth a *cheerful* giver." The spirit in which Mary wrought was precisely that of the poor widow who gave her two mites to the temple Treasury, a gift which was commended by our Lord not because it was little, but because it was all she could possibly give, being all she had. It really stood, as did Mary's ointment, for the surrender of self, for absolute, heart-whole devotion.

Now our Mother Church specially needs the whole-souled attention of her children to her doctrine, and their duty. There are so many poor Churchmen. And this is true in two senses. There are many who call themselves Churchmen who do not seem, really, to believe in the Church at all! They do not seem to realize that an Apostolic ministry, or valid sacraments, have any exclusive claim on their allegiance, and all they bring to the Church's standard is weakness, dead weight, and discouragement. And then there are some who would be very much surprised to be told that they were poor Churchmen.

"Why," say they, "we believe in the Apostolic succession. We don't think that these modern churches are any churches at all. Ours is, of course, the right doctrine and the right way. We have an incomparable liturgy," and so on. Still

they hang back when asked to attend church, teach in Sunday school, help in singing, work in the parish, interrupt for a moment their plans to use for themselves and their own pleasure God's good gifts of time, treasure, talent or instruction. They have the ointment all right, but it is neither for Christ, nor the poor. There is no real love of God in their hearts.

The Church seldom ventures to ask us to do all we can. Usually very modestly and simply—because we have been so often refused—we just ask people to do something, but to do it regularly, reliably, cheerfully, and sympathetically. Some people do things, thank God, that seem to carry a fragrance. But who does now in the Church, or for our Saviour's sake, as much as he can? And who realizes the question of life and death that is bound up here, or that we must answer for all unused opportunities at the Day of Judgment?

Christians are too often like moral bankrupts trying to compromise with duty at about fifteen cents on the dollar; and trying to feel virtuous on top of that. How much we need the splendid inspiration of Mary's example: for "she hath done what she could," and many quiet Maries since have followed her example.

The actual performance of the members of this Church is most pitiful. It is of very little

consequence that we are probably not the wealthiest Church, *per capita*; we are wealthy enough to lay just responsibilities upon us up to ten times what we manage to do. The Church abounds in talent, in education, in young people who have had, or are having, every opportunity; but a mere handful are doing the work in every parish. This does not entitle them to complain of what they do; but does give them a just right to indignation against the idle.

How is the ministry of Christ to bring to these idle members the comfort they will urgently demand in time of trouble, if their weariness is not from labor, if their poverty is from waste and not misfortune, their sickness from excess, or their bereavement from selfish neglect? We have had to meet all these cases among those who profess and call themselves Churchmen.

Then may God forgive us, the Holy Spirit enkindle us, that Christ may at the last approve us.

THE HEM OF CHRIST'S GARMENT

If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole.—
St. Matt. 9:21.

UR Lord's ministerial life was one of constant interruptions. He was engaged in answering a question about fasting, put to Him, apparently in good faith, by some of John Baptist's disciples, when He was interrupted by the coming of one Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, who begged Him to come and heal his daughter, a girl about twelve years old, who was already in a dying condition.

He went on His way toward the house of Jairus without hesitation, but, while He was going, another interruption occurred. He had with Him His usual disciples and a curious crowd, some of them favorable to Him, some unfavorable, some simply inquisitive. All these as they went were

much more observant of Him than of each other, but many of them far from careful to refrain from jostling Him. Our Lord was losing no time on the way, and was probably improving it by speech as He walked.

Unnoticed in the crowd, an unfortunate woman, a chronic invalid, one whose infirmity, if generally known, would have caused her to be considered legally unclean, and so forbidden to come into contact with anyone else until purified, came behind Him, and, bending over, touched the hem of His garment. She had been sick twelve years. She had tried hard to be cured, and physicians were ignorant and brutal, many of them, in those days. So we are told that she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

She observed that Christ seemed to be healing everyone without price, and hurting no one. He seemed to be perfectly unselfish, and nothing was too hard for Him. Perhaps, being consciously unclean, she feared to ask Him to touch her, but that there was enough healing power in His Person to flow out, even upon His garments, she had not a doubt. But again, perhaps the secrecy of her act was dictated entirely by modesty, and a desire not to trouble or delay Him. She thought He could bless without knowing it, and what He

gave He would not miss. That she might not be healed seems never to have occurred to her. And she was healed instantly. She had come silently, and withdrew silently with her blessing, but not so great a one as she was destined to have.

Our Lord, however, stopped at once, and caused very great surprise by asking, "Who touched Me?" He had been in a street crowd, a narrow street, and not an entirely polite crowd, and even His disciples were very much surprised by the question. Who *hadn't* touched Him? But only one person had touched Him *with faith*, and so the contact of His sacred Person had blessed but one; and of the virtue which had gone out of Him to heal the poor woman He was perfectly conscious. So He insisted, "Somebody touched Me!"

So the poor woman, seeing that Christ knew, though very much frightened, and not quite understanding, came and confessed her unclean sickness, her secret boldness, her faith, and then that she had been healed. And then our Lord showed He had the kindest motives in stopping, and we can bless Him for it, as doubtless she did; for He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Now why should this woman have thought that there could be any virtue proceeding from our Lord's garments? Does not her attitude strike

us as being singular? But our modern attitude toward clothes would have struck her, and every one of her contemporaries, as quite inexplicable. The Israelites were taught to consider their clothes religiously. They wore them for warmth or coolness, for protection, for modesty, and, in a way, for religious recognition. All Jews in our Lord's time dressed pretty much alike. That a man was a Jew could be told by his clothes. It could even be told if he were a devout Jew. No good Jew would wear a garment made of wool and linen mixed, because it was contrary to the law. And every careful Jew would wear a fringe on his garment, and on the fringe, whether run through or tacked on, a blue ribbon, which you will find commanded in the fifteenth chapter of Numbers. This blue ribbon was to be a constant reminder of God's Law. That was what it was meant for, and so it was understood. Blue was the color of the heavens, and was thus peculiarly sacred.

The garments of the priesthood were so sacred and so personal, that when the High Priest died his successor was robed in the garments of the dead man as a necessary part of his investiture. Elisha too, you will remember, attached great importance to taking up the mantle of Elijah which fell from him when he was carried away, and

smote the waters of Jordan with the wrapped mantle to give him passage, as Elijah had showed him how. Clothes, then, among the Jews were national, personal, and religious in significance. The hem of every man's robe being made specially to remind him of the Law, his garments stood in a sense for his personal righteousness. He would be righteous if he did the works of the Law. The most sacred thing, therefore, about a holy man would be the hem of his garment, and they were accustomed to sing, in one of the Psalms, that the oil of Aaron's anointing had "run down to the skirts of his garment."

So the poor woman's act curiously brought together the two thoughts: the Holiness of the Law and the Righteousness of Faith. Christ is "the Lord our Righteousness," and of His fulfilment of the Law we lay hold.

It could be wished that the countries of the world would not be so hasty to give up their national costumes. So far as we know they are all of them beautiful, interesting, and modest. They speak of a certain character, of the honor of the race. They are a protection against the vagaries and tyrannies of modern fashion. It seems to be very hard for some Christians to resist when the tyrants of modern dress decree the extravagant, immodest, or absurd.

The white robes of the clergy are meant to symbolize the Righteousness of Christ. But the fact that they are worn further symbolizes that the righteousness of Christ can be imparted. What the hem of His garment was to the poor woman, the Sacraments are to us. Though they veil His presence, they assure us of it, and they convey to us His grace, if only we have the touch of faith.

Christ as our example, His deeds as patterns and inspiration for ours, carry us back again to the thought of our garments as, in some way, sacraments of ourselves. We testify to a man's innocence when we say that "he has kept his skirts clean." That is, from his consecrated head to the hem of his robe he has walked as God would have him, rather through God's dew than man's dust. The saints, too, "have washed their robes."

This is not a reverent age, and is not likely again soon to pay too much attention to the relics of the saints. But that we may be impressed for good by what they have left behind, that has been in contact with them, or the instrument of their service, every visitor to Mount Vernon would probably testify. Washington has not been canonized by the Church, but he is no doubt a national saint, and rightly so regarded. Everything that we see that was his somehow speaks of him, and for him.

His bed, his desk, his clothes, all somehow affect us, and affect us for good, because they seem to bring us into contact with his undoubted goodness, his unselfish devotion to his family, his country, and his fellow-citizens. "For righteousness is immortal."

The desire to be remembered is natural, and not to be condemned. Who is there, then, that would not wish so to live that, when kind hands come to fold and lay aside for charity, or perhaps to be briefly treasured, the garments which have warmed and in some way expressed us here, those who do this service may in some way recall acts and evidences of a consecrated life, of a helpful walk, of an anointing which has overflowed upon our relics, and has made them reminders of God's goodness, in us, and through us, to those who have been heirs with us of the grace of life?

THE BUSINESS OF SERVING THE LORD

Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.—Romans 12:11.



If you should sit down to read the Epistle to the Romans straight through, you would probably find many things hard to understand, though there would surely be passages here and there that would give you a real thrill. But this twelfth chapter is just as practical as it can be. It is full of directions how to live a good life. And if you have been feeling pretty well satisfied with yourself, and then take up this chapter, you will be apt to say to yourself, "There is more in religion than I had supposed. I haven't been so good after all."

The chapter begins by showing us that religion, which we have been taught is a matter of faith, a matter for the soul, is not complete unless it

includes the service of our bodies. They must be dedicated, offered as living sacrifices to God. We must serve Him, not only in sincerity of heart, but with "all our strength," because Christ has redeemed our bodies as well as our souls. We must not only *keep* our bodies clean, but must make them *busy* in God's service. So much for our duty towards God. And as to our duty towards our neighbor, we are given the best of reasons why we should attend to that: "we are all members one of another," all bound together in one body. The good we do others reacts on ourselves; the evil others may do us hurts them even worse than it does us.

Now of the many precepts which this chapter contains let us consider only these three. They could be taken separately; but they have been included in one verse in our translation: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." They are really closely connected, and come naturally in this order from St. Paul's lips. "Not slothful in business." What is business? We are very apt to say of our friends and neighbors, John is a farmer, Henry is a blacksmith, James is a railroad man, and then, Alexander is a business man. But haven't these other people any business? Why, yes, certainly. Anything you can be busy about is business. And what you

ought to be busy about is *your* business. It isn't the farmer's business to sit on the fence, nor the blacksmith's to spend the day pitching horseshoes; they have, or ought to have, something else to do. The German Bible renders the first part of the text in an illuminating way. Translated back into English it might read, "Do not neglect what you ought to do," that is, fill up your time right.

Then comes in the second clause, "Fervent in spirit." Fervent is a word we connect with heat. Boiling water is fervent water. But there is another kind of boiling water. It is water from a boiling spring, where you can look down and see the bubbles rising up, and yet put your hand into the water and feel that it is delightfully cool. This is really what the text means. You can't keep up your daily duties, and be up to the mark in them, unless you have the freshness of God's Spirit in your soul. St. Paul would not tell us to keep in good spirits all the time, to have the freshness of the soul serve as a support to us in heavy duties, unless there was a Source outside of ourselves where we might refresh ourselves, and go on being refreshed. This Source is the Spirit of God, the Gift which the Master calls Living Water. He will always unfailingly give to those who pray for His help and His presence. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

And this brings us to the third part of the text: "Serving the Lord." We are not working merely for ourselves; we are not working for any sordid or mean master. We are really working for our Heavenly Father. Just think how hard it must have been to realize this when St. Paul wrote. The Roman empire, of which he was a citizen, was full of slaves in his day, over whom their masters had the power of life and death. They were never paid for what they did. They were at the mercy of tyrannical whims. St. Paul succeeded in converting many of these slaves to Christianity, and in bringing joy and contentment into their lives by making them feel that, in doing their work heartily and well, they were serving and pleasing God.

Nowadays, too, there are great complaints that men do not get wages enough, that rich men always get the lion's share, and so on. And some people seem to think the remedy lies entirely in working shorter hours, going on strikes, or taking the heart out of what we do. St. Paul would say rather, "Put your heart into it." You owe it to your own soul to do your best work, the best you are capable of; otherwise your powers and usefulness will run down. But, more than all, you owe it to God. He has put you here. He is Lord of all. He is Judge of all. He knows what is important.

—He knows that everything is important, but character most of all. And every chance that comes to you, or what men call chance, is an opportunity of serving God.

In old times great knights and lords used to count it a great honor to be allowed to hold the stirrup of the king when he mounted his horse, something a stable-boy would do for you, if you needed such a service. We would call that in itself menial service. But it makes a difference for whom you do things. Isn't it true that all of us here would prefer to have an opportunity to do a service to our President, or any distinguished man, rather than just to have an invitation to a reception where we could take his hand? If you took his hand it would be with a thousand others, and he couldn't possibly *remember* you. But if you did him a real service, he could not possibly *forget* it, and that's a big difference.

It is always the proudest moment in a boy's opening life when he finds that what he does really counts, that he is regarded as useful. But unfortunately there is a great deal of foolishness talked abroad among people that, because this is a free country, where all have equal political rights, we ought not to recognize any masters, and that no one has a right, or can acquire a right, to have us serve. But service is a grand word. We use

it for this gathering here. We are assembled for Divine Service. The test of life is truly faith, but we must show our faith by our service, for all work is in one way or another service. And we must never forget what Christ said: "He that would be chief among you must be the servant of all." "I am among you as He that serveth."

There is nothing too hard or too lowly for love to do. There is no labor that God's Spirit cannot lighten, and make it shine and glow. Christ washed His disciples' feet, and still washes us from the daily grime of our sins. With what approval He speaks of "the faithful and wise servant," whom, as a reward for watchfulness and diligence, his lord will make "ruler over all his goods." And thus He puts before us the splendid ideal of service, usefulness, the desire to do all and be all that our Heavenly Father would have us do or be. And to those who are "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," He offers companionship in life and labor, the rewards of a good conscience, the favor of God, present support, and final rest and refreshment in Him. "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

AN ADVENT WATCHWORD

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.—Romans 13:14.



HIS text, standing as the emphatic last word of the Epistle for the First Sunday in Advent, is thus, in a way, chosen by the Church as a most important and necessary watchword for the season. The Church, like a good mother, believes in rising early, earlier than the rest of the world. It is still night for the men of the world and of the flesh. They are using the cover of darkness for ungodly pleasure. Some, too, are sleeping from weariness, and some from excess. But, for those who are awake, the Morning Star has begun to shine, and promises Day.

The Church has also light which she can kindle early against the coming of the fuller glory, and she arms herself against the “works of darkness” and the enemies of the truth by putting on “the

armor of light." Her children here are still in the flesh, and subject to the strong appeal of the flesh. The flesh, if left to itself, would lead us to live a completely animal life. It endeavors to make us regard it as our natural master, calling always for food, sleep, and pleasure, and saying, with regard to the evident shortness of the time for these things: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Man is the best of the animal creation, because he is the least animal. He seems, however, capable of worse debasement than any other of the animal creatures. All other creatures eat to live, and mainly to live, and gluttony is everywhere the way to an early death. So excess writes in clear characters its sentence on the man or beast who yields to it, destroying beauty, destroying efficiency, destroying the power of attack and defense. In spite of this clear sentence of Nature man yields to drunkenness, because he would "fulfil the lust of the flesh."

He would let his passions do their worst with him, and will even plan to have them do so. The extraordinary gift of foresight, prevision linked with provision, given him for an entirely different purpose, is made to serve the lust of the flesh. The Romans have left a record of elaborately planned debauchery, which we hoped would never

be repeated; but evil man still ingeniously devises wickedness, even in a Christian land. These things continue on from generation to generation, because the actual constitution of human nature does not change.

It was true in St. Paul's day that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." It is equally true now. And yet the Christian is not taught to hate his flesh, or to treat it unnaturally. He is not taught to deny its reasonable desires. He may not even neglect it; though mistaken religionists have so taught him to do. Since work has become his law, and the body is the instrument of his labors, he must spend much care upon it, must feed it, cleanse it, rest it, use it and not abuse it.

Even in the discipline of the body he must use the light of wisdom. He may fast, but he must not starve; he must exercise, but not overtax his powers. There are lusts of the mind as well as lusts of the flesh. In general, when we use the word "lust" in our translation we mean, not desires in general, lawful and normal, but over-driven, imperious desires, that would leave a man enslaved to the lower part of himself. And so, too, we have practically agreed not to speak of the "body that shall be" in the world to come as "flesh."

It is true that the creed early expressed the resurrection as “the resurrection of the flesh.” But it is clear that the word is used in the early creed in a different sense from that which it bears in St. Paul’s saying, “Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” The body here is the subject of progressive corruption, of which inoffensive illustrations could be the falling of the hair, the flaking of the skin. Flesh is heir to these things, or rather, “flesh and blood.”

The mention of the blood recalls the process by which our bodily life is sustained here, and, though we believe firmly in a resurrection body, we cannot think of it as sustained by a process like eating or drinking, or by the circulation of the blood. We live here of our Father’s bounty, indirectly of Him: in the life to come we are to be in immediate touch with His life. But the coming life is not to be thought of as maimed or unreal, by being spiritualized. We are to be not so much “unclothed,” as “clothed upon.”

So the Christian man, because he is urged not to make provision for the lusts of the flesh, is not thereby advised against a true foresight for his body, a true care for it here. By putting his body into training and discipline, under the complete control and command of the spirit, he is really

making provision for the body against the life to come. Lust is fleeting. But the real man is capable of the loftiest desires. Lust, "when it is fulfilled," gives no satisfaction; torture begins soon with the awakening. But man's high desires were made for real satisfaction. "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

Our text stands as the turning point in the life of St. Augustine, the greatest of the Latin Fathers. Caught by the theories of the Manichees, as well as attracted by the teachings of Christ, he had been trying to make possible both the service of Christ in his spirit, and the service of his passions in the flesh. He had a long and bitter struggle. He couldn't see how it was going to be possible to live without yielding to his passions. He was sitting in the garden reading, and the book had fallen to the ground, and he heard near-by the voice of a child, "take up and read." He did so, and his eye fell first on this text we are following to-day, and it changed his whole life, being followed by his baptism, and ordination.

But if he had been powerless before to shake off his chains, how could a single sentence have changed him, especially as it seems to be just a repetition of a command to do the impossible? The answer is in the words, "Put ye on the Lord

Jesus Christ." We have spoken before of the "armor of light." St. Paul elsewhere expands this idea into the specifications of the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sandals of the gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, with prayer, which is the continual touch with the Captain and Leader. This tells us to do things which mean personal union with Christ. It puts a new centre into life. It gives us new life and new powers, because it gives us a new heart, and "out of the heart are the issues of life."

To many of us, and perhaps to most of us sometimes or in some degree, Christianity comes as a collection of details, not always satisfactorily related or explained to ourselves. It brings too often a sense of limits, rather than a sense of power. It falls back into the repetition of precepts, "touch not, taste not, handle not," always with a mild feeling of resentment on our part, because we are somehow held back, we do not see exactly why, from doing as others do. This view will not hold us back from mischief very long.

The morals of our community suffer terribly from this view of our religion, because Christianity is really meant to be a related whole, all of a piece, lived out from an inward principle, just as consistent as the development of a rose. We rec-

ognize the Christ life as consistent. It fails in no particular. And we are usually satisfied to take the title of a celebrated book, *The Imitation of Christ*, as a short definition of the Christian religion. But the exact imitation of Christ is not possible to any one not placed in the exact circumstances of Christ. So imitation is not an exact statement of what we are called upon to undertake.

The real need is Union with Christ, and this is set before us in many New Testament phrases: being "baptized into Christ," "abiding in Christ," "putting on Christ," "rooted and grounded in Him," "till Christ be formed in you," and many others. So intense is St. Paul's sentiment of the reality of this union—though nothing he says points to any loss of individuality or responsibility—that he regards our work as done by Christ, and even our sufferings as His. Only our failures are not His, that is, our real failures. For some things are not failures at all that seem so to the world. Our real failures always come by relying too fully on ourselves, or from regarding our interests as in some way different from His. They would be impossible if our abiding in Him was complete.

This solves our difficulty. We feel helpless and go to the Scriptures, and are told to do more

than ever. The further we read, for awhile, the more impossible it all seems. But by and by it appears that, along with the duty, we are offered the power of Christ to do it. We are asked to a complete surrender, which, after all, is easier than partial surrender, and then life becomes "Christ in us."

It may help us here if we consider what Christ perfectly was in two of His chief relations. He was perfectly the Son. Putting on Christ, therefore, is putting on Sonship. The Christian life is so perfectly to act our sonship that the will of the Father, the unity of the household, the brotherhood of us all, are not for a single moment forgotten. It is not a relationship which can be taken up and laid aside; if we try to do that, life becomes merely acting, play acting. Sonship is a matter of Nature. Justifying faith, then, is an incorporating faith, as well as an appropriating faith. It accepts character as well as justification. It would refuse justification without character. If Christ be really ours and we are His, His merits are really ours, and He somehow really bears our sins.

He was perfectly the lover of Men; of all men, absolutely devoted to their salvation. This made His travail and pain, His passion and death, not light—for they could not be that—but joyfully

accepted as a means of fulfilling "love's redeeming work." To such, then, as put on Christ, the whole of life is Divine Service. There is no time for sin, and no will to sin, where all of our time and will is already devoted. Consecrated thought, consecrated will, consecrated work, consecrated pain, consecrated rest and waiting—these all characterize the men who have put on Christ, and so, having made the new beginning, have received the New Creation.

"Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

"I bind unto myself the Name, the strong Name of the Trinity;
By invocation of the Same, the Three in One, the One in Three,
Of Whom all Nature hath Creation, Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my Salvation, Salvation is of Christ the Lord. Amen."

(ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE.)

MRS. ALEXANDER.

BROTHERLY LOVE

Let brotherly love continue.—Hebrews 13:1.

HAT conception have we generally of brotherly love? Do we not usually describe it to ourselves in terms of friendship? As if fellowship, mutual good understanding and help, common rights, a natural drawing together of hearts through kindred tastes were sufficient illustrations? This does describe friendship, and no doubt brothers ought to be friends. But brotherly love demands a better analysis. It differs from friendship because it has a different origin. Two men may easily become friends who differ in blood, in education, in talent, and adaptability, because, without explanation needed or always possible, love has grown up between them. Such love may be born of admiration, gratitude, or pity. The love, however, begins and effects the friendship. But we are brothers by nature long before it is reasonable to expect real friendly love.

Brothers have, first, the same father, the same nature, the same inheritance, the same family honor. They share naturally in everything. Except in the case of twin births, one is older and the other younger; one is usually weaker, and the other stronger. What love there is between them, prior to the awakening of mutual friendship, is a sort of mutual inheritance in the regard of others: they are wrapped up, as it were, in the same blanket of fatherly and motherly love. Personal affection may afterward arise between them for exactly the same class of reasons as create other friendships. But brotherly love as couched in terms of duty—and it is always so expressed in the Scriptures—seems to be equally a duty when it is no pleasure. So here is where the breakdown generally comes.

When we lose admiration or respect, when we have to blame a natural brother, when he has become so burdensome that we have lost patience with him, then brotherly love is apt to disappear, and show that it wasn't really genuine. For brotherly love, being part of our inheritance as sons, ought in the elder son to resemble fatherly love, in the younger love of a son.

Fatherly love is characterized by self-sacrifice and devotion to the young and helpless, the undeveloped and undisciplined. The son repays some-

thing by and by, but never to the person bestowing most. He repays the debt due his father generally in caring for his father's grandchildren. But love of the right sort pays for itself. Its blessedness is not in the return from the child, but from something divine in the act of loving and giving. And, in perfectly ideal fatherhood and motherhood, even a bad son is beloved, while he may be mourned; the prodigal, before he thinks about returning; even the idiot and helpless, incapable of response. "We love Him because He first loved us." He first loved us, and His fatherly love was independent of our desert.

So brotherly love is not particularly virtuous when it is only the affection between congenial brothers, but only when it is like the love of Christ, who came "to seek and save the lost." All this bears most importantly upon our relation to other classes, other races, and other churches; upon the view we take of our responsibilities to and for criminals, delinquents, and those usually counted outlawed, or outcast. The common Fatherhood, the common redemption, ought to be enough. We draw the lines of help and duty entirely too close to our own known race, to the circle of our own intimates. "Mercy to thousands" is God's motto, and should be ours.

According to the teaching of the Gospel, as

we read the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we realize that Lazarus was the brother of Dives, though unknown and unrecognized. Dives recognized but five. He could not see brotherhood in one more, even though that one more was laid at his gate. This unrecognized brother or sister is the condemnation of our modern society, our modern churches, as well as of the type of Dives.

There are, of course, undeniable temptations to us in the common life of the household. Jacob showed favoritism, and was in a sense as much to blame for Joseph's misfortunes, human nature being what it is, as some of the unloving brothers. Joseph himself was not superior to giving Benjamin as his guest five times what he gave anyone else. And Joseph had been extremely conceited, and must have been very hard to live with, if we read Genesis right. Brotherly love is, therefore, expressed in terms of *duty*, because it is often very hard.

And there are going to be just as great difficulties in doing our duties to the brotherhood of the Church, to that of the local community, to the larger one of the nation, and the supremely great brotherhood of humanity. There are always troublesome members in every congregation. This makes less discomfort for others if the congregation is pretty large, but usually because we can

then neglect the disagreeable brother. It isn't because our duty is any easier, but because we neglect it, that we seem to have an easier time.

The one necessary factor is the Cross. The Cross marks the death of the Elder Brother for the whole brotherhood. It is the very reverse of the behavior of that other elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It marks the real crowning of character. For no crown was ever nobler than the Crown of Thorns. And when we see the crown of gray hairs which we are taught to regard as so honorable, it is by no means always the fruit of age, but sometimes of loving care and trouble, and of sorrow which, nevertheless, has her blessing.

Let us learn that the true way of family life is the way of forgiveness, of long suffering, of continuous welcome. That a family outcast should remain outcast after repentance shows that there is somebody else who ought to repent; it should be unthinkable in pure Christianity. Where our own have shamed us, we ought to think of the Shame of the Cross. We ought to remember how much our Saviour has had to bear from us, how much our own parents and brothers have had to put up with during the long course of our own upbringing. "Let brotherly love continue," that is, let it stand the test of time, the test of sacrifice, the test

of temptation. Let it rise superior to false pride, let it stand as a refuge for the returning sinner, that the joy of heaven may be ours in welcoming the wanderers home, in seeing them restored and happy in their Father's house.

MERCY, THE TRUE TEST OF RELIGION

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?

And he said, He that showed mercy unto him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.—St. Luke 10: 36, 37.



WHILE the learned class among the Jews was almost a unit in its opposition to our Lord Jesus Christ, there were honorable exceptions; and now and then a man who seemed, even while in opposition, to have a deeper conception of truth than his fellows. This lawyer, whose questions to Christ gave occasion for the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and thereby did us all a wonderful service, was able to see what was the very core and centre of the Old Law; this, from Deuteronomy 6: 5: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy strength, and with all thy mind," adding from Leviticus 19:18, "and thy neighbor as thyself." It was no small thing to have thus answered. But the lawyer shows how much easier it is to state a principle than to apply it, and also the tendency we all have to limit our duty to a very narrow field, when he further questions, "Who is my neighbor?"

Then our Lord tells the story of the Good Samaritan, who had rescued the wounded man, who was not his friend, nor even of his nation, and with whose misfortune he had nothing to do; while the priest and the Levite, who were devoted, at least nominally, to the service of religion, took no responsibility for the suffering they plainly saw, and hastened away on their own affairs. The Samaritan had been brought up in an inherited hostility to all Jews, but he had a tender heart. He had not been taught in an orthodox creed; he did not frequent the true temple, but he was moved with compassion. And being so moved, he let his love for humanity and his tender pity for distress turn him aside from his own intended business, delay him, make him the servant of a stranger, and cause him to provide shelter and healing for him in advance. In place of trying to limit what he would be willing to do for mercy's sake, he says to the host at the Inn, "Take care of

him, and whatever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." This might possibly have been a great sum, and worldly prudence would have dictated a limit; but mercy and compassion do not know any limits.

Then our Lord asks the lawyer, "which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbor" to the wounded and plundered man? And he has to answer, whether he would or not, "He that showed mercy on him." This is the world-long test. This is the principle by which we are to guide ourselves, for the Master tells us all in the person of the enquiring lawyer, "Go and do thou likewise."

Let us observe that nothing whatever is said in the sacred narrative against the Priest and the Levite, except the simple record of their lost opportunity for mercy. We are not told that the Priest was a man of corrupt life, it is not said that he was a *particularly* selfish person. He may have been entirely respectable and law-abiding, and far from having any sympathy with robbers, such as infested the Jericho road. He may have feared, perhaps, that, lingering too long there, he himself might be just one more victim of lawlessness. There is no suggestion that he saw his duty different from his interest, or that his conscience troubled him, or that the Levite was regretful over

things undone, when they went on their ways without stopping for a rescue.

On the contrary, I think our Lord means that the Levite and the Priest were fairly typical of what the people of better station would be likely to do under the circumstances.

And, of course, the purpose of relating the history now, as part of a divine message, is not chiefly to entertain or interest us, but to have each one ask himself the question, How would my prejudices and principles have led me to act? What fellowship have I in spirit with this Samaritan? Do I not more easily find excuses for things left undone, than time and means for unselfishness?

And is it not worth touching in passing, that in the Wonderful Picture of the Last Judgment given in St. Matthew 25th, those who are there described as the fearfully reprobate are all guilty of simple neglect? So in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus; Dives was in hell and in torment, because of opportunities for mercy rejected or overlooked; and these last, these overlooked things, cannot be overlooked habitually, if our eyes and heart are alive to the call of mercy and true brotherly love.

What the Priest saw was something like this: bad policy, danger, perhaps imprudence in the victim, what we call "a deplorable occurrence."

But it was not *his* fault, not *his* business: time was pressing, delay was inconvenient, and help, probably, would do no good. And this is the way of the world.

We Churchmen are in the habit of saying solemnly before God when we come to Church, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done." But what are those things? Do we express them in this general way because it is enough to recognize the fact? Why, certainly not. We speak out our neglects in these general terms, because we wish to bear witness that neglected duty is a constant sin, and that we all neglect our duty more or less. We could not stop to put in all the particulars in a *common* prayer, but we ought each to find out, and for himself to deplore his own particular neglects. And if we have them to deplore once, and then again have the same story of the same neglect to tell our Maker, where has true repentance been? Or, if we are so self-satisfied as to suppose we have not neglected duty, must it not be that we do not read duty with the largeness with which it is written in the Gospel, and that we are *formally* religious *just for ourselves*?

Go out into any street of any American City, and a short promenade will be sure to introduce you to countless things which want mending.

Leave out of consideration the average reformer's way of remedying any evil, which is to go out and break something, or have some one arrested; and take up the matter in the Good Samaritan's way. Here is suffering. Whose fault is it? This was not any question which we can read in the Good Samaritan's mind. Perhaps he knew without asking. The question might also have come up, Why had not someone of the sufferer's own people helped him? But the Samaritan wasted no time with that. *His* question was, How can *I* help him, and get him to a place of safety? He does not stop over the fact that the victim's sufferings were not caused by his discoverer, that other people were more responsible, that other people of more means might soon come along, but simply puts his own personal services at this unknown's disposal. He becomes the incarnation of helpfulness. Mercy absorbs him. His regrets were not that business was delayed, convenience interfered with, that another was riding while he had to walk, that good money was being thrown away—his regret was only over the calamity, the pain of another. He would have felt much worse had he been unable to help.

Two pence seems a small gift to a landlord to care for a wounded stranger. But when a day's wages were a penny, a penny would pay for more

than two days' care. It would keep a family two days, and a single person many more. So it stands for great liberality.

This church building was erected and opened to the honor of Almighty God. It is occupied by a very ancient communion, claiming an Apostolic commission, and believing itself called upon to continue what Jesus "began to do and teach, before He was taken up" into Heaven, and what His disciples were to continue to do and teach till the end of the age.

Nevertheless, it has come somewhat late into many parts of our country. What excuse has it for coming at all? Has it a more beautiful and aesthetic service? We may question whether the services of those interesting people, commonly called the Irvingites, are not even more aesthetically beautiful. Does it offer a more moderate and rational view of religion? Possibly this idea is due to some misconception of what is really the freedom of the Church, and in the Church. No. The Church comes with a special authority, and with special claims. But people are not all equal to an unbiased consideration of these claims. They would be far more easily won to us, if they saw us come as the Good Samaritan, to do good, to heal morals, protect virtue, always do those

useful, disagreeable things which lie before our very gates, but which we elect not to see.

Until compassion has a chief place in our hearts; until mercy stirs to action; until we feel we can't afford to do a selfish thing; until we realize that a man's character is all he can take before the judgment seat of Christ, and that the final condemnation of a Christlike man is impossible; until these things move us actively, there is much to be hoped and prayed for in the Church and world.

And who are we? Are we indeed an outcast race? Have we not rather promises, blessings, riches of hand and heart? Is not God our Father? Are we not called to be like Him?

Awake us, Almighty God! Awake us, Lord Christ, to the call to a deep and characteristic likeness to Thee. Make us to thank God every day that Thou hast said, "Blessed are the Merciful; for they shall obtain Mercy." Amen.

THE TRAVAIL OF THE SOUL

He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.
—Isaiah 53:11.



ANY of you, watching the approach of what threatened to be a gloomy evening, growing dark from low western clouds before it ought to, have been delighted to see the sudden breaking forth of the sun, just before it went below the horizon, and the day faded away with a smile. It reminds one of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, just before the night of His career shut down upon an apparent failure.

We have to say *apparent* failure for more reasons than one. For, even if death had really finished Christ's career as a Preacher of Righteousness, one can believe that, as soon as clear mindedness had come to make men realize by comparison with all other teachers the grandeur

of His precepts, His influence would have begun to grow again. There is a saying, "You could not have built a Living Church on a Dead Christ," but men would have built something, for what Christ gave them was the best they had ever received. Many people now admire Christ, quote Him, in some way try to imitate Him, who yet do not believe as we do in the Resurrection from the dead. Their soul, their conscience, cannot say Him nay. Though in their belief He is still numbered with the dead, they count Him worthy of the highest immortality they think possible. And though dead, as they mournfully feel, yet still He speaketh with the noblest and most inspiring voice of history.

And this introduces us to a fact that may at first seem strange, but manifold experience verifies, that human failures often seem to involve more moral success, and afford more inspiration to posterity, than the so-called successful lives.

Too many successful lives could be epitomized or judged in the words of Christ, "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." Such lives come to a full stop here. The inspiration of failure goes on forever. The American Revolution gives two shining instances; the death of Nathan Hale, and the glow of patriotism that comes to us when we read of the sufferings at the

Valley Forge. Hale's enterprise was absolutely unsuccessful. He was hanged as a spy. But Hale was a man and a patriot. "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country" has been the inspiration of many devoted deeds.

Saratoga was glorious, Yorktown and Appomattox; but the real glory of Appomattox was in the magnanimity of Grant, and the self-forgetfulness of Lee. Lee's greatness as a citizen gains greatly from his behavior in defeat. Let an old soldier move along a line of captured trophies as he may do, and they stir his pride; but let him stop before a monument like that at West Point to "Dade and his Command"—that little army that left no unwounded survivor—and he seizes at once upon their behavior then as exemplary, as what a soldier ought to do. And what more precious memories has the Navy than Lawrence's, "Don't give up the ship," or the thought of the Cumberland's flag still flying over her sunken hull, or Craven's courteous words, "After you, Sir!" There is no real success if a man fails to be a man, and no failure if he does.

Christ had failed by His life to accomplish the salvation of His people. He had not failed in what He came to be. No one had convicted Him, or could convict Him, of sin. He had never failed any man or woman who had come to Him for

truth or comfort. No limit can be assigned to the outflow of His benevolence. It was only that "in the sight of the unwise He seemed to die, and His departure was taken for misery." He was at rest, and consecrated the grave for every man by His rest.

When the woman who was a sinner wept out her penitence and love over the Master's feet; when the lepers were cleansed, and the dead raised up, and the poor heard the Gospel; when children ran to His arms, and the grasping publican began to restore fourfold; when sightless eyes opened first to behold their Saviour—a type we may well believe of our own resurrection—then Christ already had a partial return for the travail of His soul. He certainly put some of the joy of His earthly labors into words when He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The fruitage that remains to be manifested is in "the multitude that no man can number." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory," through Him who was willing to fail in human eyes.

We would all like to succeed. How many do succeed in the plans they make for life? How many lawyers are successful in their profession? How many physicians make a name beyond a

most limited circle? How many business men go through life without a failure; without the need of a fresh start, and a good deal of accommodation? Exact figures are not what we need. We only need to know that there is always plenty in life to explain discouragement, even if not to justify it. Discouragement is the worst fruit of failure, sometimes its prophecy. To keep sweet and hopeful, in spite of all, is the great thing.

Hence, if anyone is planning to become a merchant, we cannot promise him success. All we can promise is, that virtue will be a great comfort, if he be honest. We cannot promise the doctor fame, but we do know that he will receive the blessing of the poor, if he be diligent and kind. We cannot promise a bride that her husband and children will make her happy, but we can promise her that she can make herself into a blessing, and a refuge, and a holy name, if she be worthy.

It is the Christian life that has the promises. It is the only career that carries along with it a cure for daily mistakes, weakness, and even sin. "These things write I unto you that ye sin not. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world"—the *whole world!*

In the Christian life we have sometimes set before us the figure of competition: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?" But this is a metaphor which can not be driven too far. In the business world, another man's success may mean our failure. But not so in the service of Christ. The more we help others to succeed, the greater our own success. A selfish effort, even after character, defeats character. And how much it adds to our hope that something may be accomplished by us when we see with what faulty materials God has elsewhere won His successes.

We are not intended to win all the fruits of character here, but God intends us to see enough to confirm our souls, to give us that experience that "worketh hope."

This is the true sphere of labor, the labor or travail of the soul. In too many of us the soul can hardly be said to be awake at all, much less to be at work. And one great use of our failures in this life is to call our attention to the real opportunities we have in this higher sphere. Our material failures are the more accented when they happen now, because other men do so much. Life is so spectacular; we talk in millions, nothing surprises us. But tremendous as are the successes and the failures of modern life, the flatness of

earth's greatest successes was never more plain. If it be happiness a man seeks and he does not get it, what difference does it make what else he gets? Even his gold is "fool's gold," if he be a fool. It is the soul that counts.

Holy Week brings before us a group of friends whose chief mutual concerns were with the soul. We have friendships, but have they gone as far as that? What have we done with our friends? Are their souls anything to us, or have we ever done anything for them? We have met them, walked and talked with them, exchanged tolerant views, shared kindred tastes, been mutually helpful, perhaps, in study and business. All this is very much. How sweet many friendships are, and yet how much sweeter they might be if they went on to the matters of the soul! There may come a time when a real friend faces death, perhaps disgrace, perhaps is threatened through temptation and is, alas, weak; then the heart of his friend begins to cry, "I am distressed for thee, my brother." "I would help, but there is no help in me."

Man goes to his trouble chiefly alone, unless God be with him. When the example of our correct morality, our cool temperance, cannot hold up a friend, our spirit, if it would effect anything, must cry mightily to God. So can men be led by

their friendships to the feet of Him who alone can save their friends. How Christ labored for His friends! How He taught them, led them, had patience with them, showed them their errors, served them! He, their Master, bore their misunderstandings and forsakings. He never forsook them; He lived for them; He died for them. He taught us that a friend is worth dying for, that this is the test. And through His greatest sacrifice He won them as He had ever won them before. They were really won; He saw of "the travail of His soul."

Let us all realize that a man's work ought to call on all of his powers. If a man has the gifts to be a great artist, he ought to be one. If we have souls, we ought to work with them. Work with the soul, and for the soul, is the highest work. It was the way Christ worked for us. It is the way we should work with Him and for Him, and He will turn our travail into joy.

THANKSGIVING DAY

*There is a lad here that hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?—
St. John 6:9.*



REVIEW of current events, with a view to selecting those things which we may regard as most important among our causes for gratitude, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages. It overlooks the possibly different standpoints of different people toward the same happenings. Political events may leave one man sore, and make another happy just before Thanksgiving Day. A Free trader and a Protectionist can never worship comfortably together after a tariff war unless they have in common other reasons for gratitude to God. And then, the Scriptures make it clear that a Christian is expected to be happy, and to give thanks anyhow, no matter what has happened. For our real happiness is grounded in eternal verities, and nothing can shake them.

Would it not, therefore, be a good idea to go back to the simplest idea of prosperity—physical prosperity, we can find, and analyze that—and see if both rich and poor cannot discover a common ground on which to join in an act of thanksgiving?

As a general rule, we here do not have to take very anxious thought about provision for the day. While we recognize with a great deal of concern that our dollar is continually losing purchasing power, there are plenty of people to remind us that, even in the days when it would purchase a great deal more of certain commodities than it now does, there were some of them that we now buy pretty cheaply that formerly, and not so long ago, could not be bought at all by most people. They were only to be had occasionally, and exceptionally. Life is, in many ways, on a more liberal scale than formerly.

But it is easy to conceive of occasions now when a whole community might be very glad of very simple supplies. We are so used to rapid transit, to bring to us all we need on short notice, that a complete stoppage of transportation for a very little while might induce us all to put ourselves on an allowance.

The five thousand people who went out to seek our Lord in the desert place belonging to Bethsaida undoubtedly included persons of various condi-

tions of life. The majority were, of course, poor, and most of the poor do not worry half as much about what is likely to happen, or not to happen, as those whom we call more fortunate. But there must have been a good many there who had not been accustomed to limit their fare entirely by necessity, to eat as little as they had. So, finding five thousand people without food all at once threw into relief the question, "what are the necessaries of life?" How much, or how little, could we do with?

Our Lord raises that question at once when He says to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" He did not propose anything but the satisfaction of a real want. If that were met, the green grass and the fresh air ought to count something for the luxuries otherwise missed. Philip calculates for the most modest provision; a little for everyone, he says, would cost two hundred pence, a very large sum in those days, and among poor people, and evidently stated by Philip as something quite beyond the possibilities. It would cost as much as that, and therefore it couldn't be done.

Then comes Andrew's introduction of the lad with the five loaves of the coarse bread of the country, the food of the poor, and the two little fishes of the lake. And the lad was prepared to

give them up. We may infer that the Lord's company at least offered to buy them, for that was the original question, "Whence shall we buy?" At any rate, they would not have given away what did not belong to them, though that is not unknown now, and masquerades as liberality.

Now here is the very simplest fare that you and I can conceive, and a multitude getting that when they were very glad to get it. Common as it was, it was enough. Now what was involved in getting it at all? The miraculous part of the story may be set aside for just a moment. What concerns us is the thanksgiving part of it. When these men got bread enough, from whom did they get it? Who coöperated? They got it from the hands of the disciples, who were acting as unpaid assistants of our Lord's munificence. The disciples got it from a boy, who had brought it there, if we know anything about conditions then, in one of the common country baskets. There were baskets there, anyhow.

The boy got the bread from his mother, who ground the grain in her little hand mill, mixed the dough and baked it. She got the grain from her husband or some farmer, and to get the grain to her, there had been ploughing, harrowing, seed-ing, reaping, thrashing, winnowing, carrying, and storing. Somebody had to make the plough and

the harrow, and somebody cut the wood and smelted the metal which entered into the makeup of the tools. Somebody, a smith, had to make the reaping hook. Somebody had to breed the ox that trod out the grain on the threshing floor. Someone had to gather the rushes that made the boy's basket, and then the basket had to be made. Then, in the fishing there had been necessary the fisherman, the boatbuilder, the nailsmith, the net maker, the flax spinner, the farmer again, and the one who cured the fish. It was the simplest fare, but not so simple, after all; for all these hands were necessary, and everyone added something to the gift.

And, more than this, the seed that was sown had been through the same process, year after year, since the first time that barley was discovered to be good for food. It was not the feeding of five thousand that was so much in evidence, as the feeding of a hundred successive generations, four thousand years of people, and the still having enough at the end of four thousand years to plant the fields for more. Now with all this, how much of the work was done from necessity, and how much from love? Depend upon it, a very large portion from love. Wages are not paid for half that is done in this world that adds liberally to our pleasure and support.

Now turn from the common things of our Lord's time to the common things of to-day. The veriest commonplaces of the table would be bread, butter, sugar, salt, potatoes, tea, coffee. Your breakfast this morning—and breakfasts are getting a little simpler—was perhaps porridge, cream, coffee, bacon, toast, and marmalade. No trouble to get a breakfast like that! What, no trouble? No trouble to you, perhaps, but somebody had to take trouble! The marmalade is marked Dundee, and had to come from there in a steel ship, built on the Clyde from American steel. They do not grow oranges in Scotland, so those oranges found their way there from Spain in another ship. The toast was made from Minnesota flour, the bacon cured, wherever grown, in Kansas City or Chicago, drawn to the stock yards over miles and miles of railroad. The coffee came from Southern Brazil, the sugar from Honolulu. If less than a thousand different hands have been busy getting you your breakfast, it cannot be enough less to make the lesson of our mutual dependence less important.

Most of this work, mind you, was done with good will; some of it paid and a lot unpaid; and for all that wasn't paid for, we owe, at least, thanks.

Now most of us fail to realize that this is the way God normally works. It is easier, some-

how, to believe a thing comes from God if the wind blows it into our laps, than it is, if some man walks up and hands it to us. But that is quite incorrect as a mental attitude. The man is certainly more like God than the wind is, even granting that the winds are mysterious. God waits on us, and serves us, surely, sometimes by the winds and rains, and the disciples owed those five barley loaves to the rains no less than the seed; but He also waits on us by these thousands of hands. Your mother, when she nursed you, was doing God's work. Some people do not believe in special Providences, and some people do not believe in Providence unless it *is* special. But God's Providence is working all the time. The five thousand saw a wonderful miracle, but they saw only a very small part of it.

Now, just as all these many generations before Christ's time had been busy with getting that barley bread ready for that miracle, and all the time it was God that was at work; so our thanks, when once we are roused to offer them to God, do not amount to much unless we begin to offer them to Him through man, who has been serving us. Here are all these working men. The most that we see in the labor market is the struggle of the laborer to get better wage. But, whatever he gets, he does not seem to get any gratitude.

Here is our table served with fish from the Grand Banks. It would do every one good who ever eats a piece of cod-fish to read Kipling's "Captains Courageous." All these fish taste of danger and hardships, and many of them of heroism.

Here is a community really supported by an invisible industry, it might be by the mines. It would then make no difference how a few of us got our incomes; in roundabout ways it all goes back to the mines. That would be true of Pittsburgh, true of Birmingham, just as Omaha is all supported by farms; and the miner, again, could not work without the farmer. Are you grateful to the miner for his share in the food you eat, and the clothes you wear? Do you ever think about him, do you care anything about him? Does he not do infinitely more for you than you do for him? Would you take his job and be contented and smiling about it? All my bread is salted by his danger. There is blood on some of the coal I burn. And if we do not thank the miner, how are we to get our thanks back to God? He does not accept them unless they come through the proper channels. You can't throw them up into the air, and have them stay there. The right way to send thanks to God for His support of such a com-

munity, is to send them down a mine, or thank His servant, the farmer.

Indeed, the lesson of Thanksgiving Day may be briefly expressed in this general conviction, that, whenever you meet anyone whom you know to be active in his duty, you can make up your mind without much fear of being mistaken that you owe that man something, that he is, in someway, ministering to you, and that any man who is half a man is glad of it. And so, be glad yourself of every opportunity to share the blessing which comes when you willingly lend your hands to Christ to help along the miracle, the daily, perpetual miracle of the feeding of the world.

It is only when we refuse to pass along our blessings that men have to go away without food. Oh, may we show forth our thankfulness, "not only with our lips, but in our lives."

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY

Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.—St. Luke 10: 24.



HIS forms the conclusion of our Lord's comment on the success of the Mission of the Seventy. First went forth the twelve, and they were successful beyond their hopes and expectations. Then followed the seventy, our Lord's second choice of His disciples. They knew what had happened before, and were, no doubt, encouraged to look for some fruits from their own ministry, even though they were the second sending; but they also were astonished at the power they could exercise through the Name of Jesus. "Even the devils," they reported, "are subject unto us through Thy Name."

What was rejoicing to them was also rejoicing to our Lord. "He rejoiced in spirit." He said,

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

The text is part of a private communication to the disciples. He does not say to every one, but simply to them the words, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see." He will not bless them publicly, and thus attract attention to them. He does not hesitate to remind them that they are babes. This that they have just done has come from Him because all things have been given to Him from the Father, and because the Son willed to reveal Himself to His simple-hearted servants and friends. It did not mean that they could think themselves wise or prudent, or even great, in themselves. What they had done had been given them. We might infer that the gift might be lost if they lost their simplicity.

Let us go back a little, and look over the prophets and kings.

With all the greatness of the prophets, they leave on our minds a general impression of having fallen on evil days. They were sent "because the days were evil." It was not good that sin should pass unrebuked, though in high places. And we hear very little from the prophets when the kings

were good, except when they rise to rebuke the sins or follies of the good; for the best of men need correction. The triumph of the prophets was not in the success of their predictions, which they generally did not live to see; but it was the triumph of sustaining faith. They did not see the power of righteousness visibly bring in the rule of healing and deliverance from evil. Even when they were wonder-workers, the miracles seemed hardly to postpone the final judgment on a disobedient people.

The kings were good and bad. The bad kings naturally are not alluded to by this text. It is only the good kings who had the desire to see such things as our Lord's simple followers afterward wrought. But there were a number of good kings; and even some of the bad kings had good points, and, in some way, advanced the purpose of God. The good kings of Judah (there were no good kings of Israel) were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. They had their faults, and those faults are not concealed from us. Some of these faults were the common infirmities of other men who can be called good, and others were due to a yielding to temptations that came with power.

But no one can doubt that the sacred historians have done right to call these kings good, as human

goodness goes, in both their relations to God and to men. They looked up to the King of kings. They had a will to do good to their people. But often they appear to have been powerless to accomplish much, though they were supposed to have all the power that absolute monarchy could give them. They began reformations, they broke down idols, but it all came to nothing; because the people whom they wished to serve, elevate and convert, had no real heart for holiness.

A good king cannot save a bad people. The progress of righteousness, of the true kingdom of God, must affect the unseen mass of the people to amount to anything real and lasting. This is one reason why the true kingdom of God is so quiet and secret in its working. It is so much easier to see badness than goodness, even though badness tries to hide itself. And this, it seems, should encourage us about the present, which always seems hopeless to so many.

The success of the mission of the seventy seems to have had other noticeable attendants.

We know that the ruling classes generally in our Lord's day were opposed to the recognition of His mission. He had enemies among the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians: most of these were His enemies. But there must have been a vast multitude of plain people who were either

His friends through all that happened, or were only thrown into temporary and apparent hostility by excitement, panic or delusion. What visible success He had was helped by the many distressed people, who were neither fit to help in the saving work which Christ began, nor to do anything to save themselves; but were, at least, willing to be saved. And it is simply astonishing to us now, who have so little experience of willing help from people who have long known the Gospel and its privileges, that our Lord could have put so many simple workmen into the field, and have sent them out so soon. Evidently we have much to learn in principle, and very much to add to our practice.

We are trying to show the world that the real Kingdom of God is possible in a democracy. We ought to realize that it can only be possible in a Christianized democracy. There is much explanation in the apparent failure of democracy, its graft scandals, its special privilege scandals, its judicial scandals, for the way in which men discuss the possibilities under a benevolent aristocracy, or a good king. There is much explanation also, for the attraction which some find in a Socialistic programme. There is very little room for a salvation such as Christ proposed, and still proposes, in either of these programmes. Socialism proposes to save itself. But it seems to have

all the exclusive spirit of the narrowest Judaism, and much of its self-righteousness. It has no room for Christ, and does not really propose self-sacrifice. That many of its votaries mean well, cannot be gainsaid. That their alienation from the Church has apparent justification, or at least easy explanation, is also clear. And why?

It seems to be because we haven't those who answer to the seventy. It can hardly be doubted that our Lord made secret use through the Holy Spirit, which has always been at work in the world, of all the possible material for remedying the evil He would overthrow. He cast out devils; the twelve cast out devils; the seventy did the same; and there were others who did so who had no visible call, but whom our Master did not disdain to commend, and to bless with visible success.

The trouble with the Church, with democracy, just now is that so few realize the call to help. It is all left for specialists to do. But Christianity without helpfulness is unthinkable; and, more than that, a fruitless Christianity is going to lose its vision. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see," is a text which really has to be explained to most hearers nowadays, whereas it probably explained itself to all those who heard it in the infancy, the active infancy, of the gospel dispensation.

The uncertainty about several of the deeper mysteries of our religion, which is so characteristic of our age (so that we hardly know how to answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?"), has a close connection with our inactivity in the work of the Gospel. We do not get close enough to ask our questions of the Only One who really knows. We have no real religious experience. Our lives are correct, but little different from those of decent pagans and philosophers. We ask our wisdom, and it has nothing to tell us; we consult our prudence, and it falls short. God has hid these things from such, and has revealed them unto babes. The answer sought from the new power we are learning through science to exercise over nature, is not going to comfort us. "We must be born again."

And thus it seems that the strongest use that can be made of our text for to-day's need is to encourage every man, every plain man, every young man, to enlist first and foremost in the fight against both the evil within him, and the evil outside of him. We must realize that we might easily have been the members of the seventy, and may still do a work not second to theirs. The poorest of us has received power, and may receive more power. Faith and power both grow with the use. The things we see that ought to be done are the things we are called to do. The whole

body must work; and "ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular."

Now if we were to stop at just this point we might have stirred someone to a desire to help, but have failed to accomplish much because those we have exhorted do not know how to help. But, if that desire be burning enough, we will be sure to find a way to be of use. The fight against the demon of intemperance has many places where the common man may take hold, *working on his next friend*. We do not have to go far to find a field, nor must we forget the Name of Jesus. Our very helplessness and ignorance, if recognized and confessed, will help us, for they send us out of ourselves and back to Him.

Oh, may God stir us up to help the tempted and the defeated with a whole devotion; and may He grant us to see, even in this day, some of the joy and blessing of those who can say: "Even the devils are subject to us through Thy Name."

THE BLOSSOMING OF THE WILDERNESS

*The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.—
Isaiah 35:1.*



HAT a wonderful flower the rose is! It has attracted the admiration of flower lovers from the very first. As soon as they talk about anything, they talk about roses and lilies. Some florists practically devote their lives to roses, endeavoring to develop new varieties which shall be even more beautiful than any seen before. And so now we have hundreds of varieties in nature, and the florist has developed hundreds of others. These are standard roses, climbing roses, dwarf roses, white, blush, pink, red, and roses nearly black. There are changeable roses. They vary in fragrance from none, or almost none, to what is a revelation of sweetness.

Some of the most beautiful varieties seem to bring all their power and life to a focus in a few

wondrous blooms, and others, like what we call the common roses, absolutely run riot over the fences and along the garden paths, all beauty and profusion in waves of pink or white. The bushes live a long time; some are very, very old. It takes the buds a long time to open. They are like human beings in this. And of all the flowers they leave the longest memories.

There is fragrance in the world to-day of roses that blushed and bloomed a hundred years ago. But they have thorns, and some of the most beautiful have the sharpest thorns. Nor is it possible to say that what we call the improved varieties are so absolutely more beautiful than the wilder ones. The wild rose is not so very beautiful, if you look at it with a gardener's eye. But where it belongs it exactly fits, it is just what we went there to see, and a finely developed garden rose would look out of place in the wilderness.

There are these two flowers that have always been thought of as sacred to our Lord: roses and lilies. "I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley," has always been interpreted of Christ. But the Rose is especially His flower.

"Fruit of the mystic Rose,
True Branch of Jesse's Stem,
The Root whence mercy ever flows—
The Babe of Bethlehem."

The lily on the other hand always appears in representations of the Blessed Virgin. The angel of the Annunciation is always holding it in his hand. But it is sacred to Christ as well.

Come back, though, to the rose, the wild rose as we shall have to take it here, because only the wild rose grows in the desert. How does the wild rose make us think of Christ? Look first at its home.

It is a little hard for many of our people to picture to themselves what is meant in the scripture as a desert. But, if they have ever travelled over our great West, they have seen practically everything that could describe or illustrate it. There would be three general sorts of deserts. There would be deserts like Sahara, the bottom of ancient ocean, nothing but a wide waste of drifting sand. There was little of that in Judea, and the text probably does not refer to it at all. But there are even places in that vast Sahara of death where blossoms can be found.

Then there are the deserts where it almost never rains; but some plants, specially adapted to arid conditions, can be made to grow; and other half way deserts, where it rains, at least a little every winter, but where everything dries up and turns brown early in the season, and where there is then hardly any evidence of plant life at

all. If an inexperienced observer saw it he would think there was no hope of growing anything there.

The prophet probably had in his mind a picture of things as they really happen, and this is what does happen. The wilderness is brown and bare, no grass, no trees, nothing but the colors of the rocks and the blue of the sky, the play of light and shade to tell of beauty. Then the season changes and the rain begins. Nobody lives there, but flocks are pastured there sometimes in the season. It has hardly begun to rain before greenness begins, and before very long, it isn't so much grass that we notice but that the whole plain is carpeted with flowers. It is a world of flowers. And all this beauty is practically for nobody to see, unless we are carried up to the essence and nature of things, and realize that He who created beauty loves to behold beauty. And so it is perfectly according to His nature and His mind, that He who comes as the fruit of the Mystic Rose, should be "the Chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether Lovely."

Now the rougher the wild country, the more apt you are to find that the wild flower is a rose. It isn't the flower of the flat plains. It loves slopes, and climbs over the rocks. Wherever the seepage of water between the rocks gives any hope of

lingering moisture, there the wild roses luxuriate.

Christ reminds us of the Rose springing in the desert, because He comes forth out of an apparently hopeless national history. If you had been looking for a Redeemer, would you have looked to the little arid conquered country of Palestine to find Him? There were greater nations, there were people who seemed more wonderful. But the Rose came out of the Desert of History, the wilderness of Judea.

Then He was first *found* in the wilderness. Men went out to hear John Baptist, away from the city and its artificialities, and he showed them Christ.

Then the doctrine and life of Christ are both as beautiful as they can possibly be, and they are yet so natural. How natural is goodness when Christ proclaims it! It is not slavery to precept or rule; we just surrender ourselves into God's hands, and let ourselves grow, and God makes our lives beautiful, like the Saviour's. Then the rose multiplies in a way that makes us think of the wonderful birth of Christ. It can grow from the seed haws, but it does come up from the root, shooting up some distance from the parent stem. That is the way Christ comes by a new kind of birth, to be "the Branch out of the Root."

And then the thorns remind us that we are not

worthy to touch this beauty that we can see. “Draw nigh” “to see this great sight.” But come not too nigh. Even in the Resurrection, of which the springing up every year of new life in the wilderness is such a wondrous type, Christ says, “Touch Me not.” And there is this other curious possible reflection from the thorns. It has been thought that the thorns of Christ’s crown were taken from a very rough and wild member of the rose family. When the primeval burden was laid upon the ground for man’s sin it was said, “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” And this would include the thorns of the rose, but also contained the Promise of the Rose. So Christ, the perfect Man, was crowned with thorns by other men of wild propensities; His own race run wild. *They* had run to brambles, *He* was the perfect Flower.

And, finally, these old fragrances that we meet among the relics of our great-grandmothers—these rose-leaf beads—they came from the blooms of a hundred years ago. What do they remind us of? Why, they bring to mind the refrain of many a psalm that Israel used to sing, and we ought never to forget: “His Mercy endureth forever.” The beauty of holiness cannot die, or disappear without leaving some other reminder. The fragrance of last year’s roses lingers till long after the next

year's blooms have taught again the Resurrection.
“For His mercy endureth forever.”

Oh, lavish beauty of the wild rose! We are of the same creation; why should we not try to bring forth plenteously the fruit of good works? The lavish flow of the sunlight, the vast volume of the cataract, the ocean of the winds, the infinities of the heavens, and the whole west waving with wild flowers, these all tell us not to “be weary of well-doing,” not to stint our sacrificial outpouring of our powers. Nothing is lost. It all goes back to God. And He is good, and “His mercy endureth forever.”

But it is the Gospel which makes the desert bloom. And the world is still, so much of it, a wilderness. Is there any great work of our government which has so much attracted us of late years as Reclamation? And is not this just the other word for Redemption? If man can work at Reclamation for the sake of agriculture, why cannot we work for Redemption for Christ? For, wherever the Gospel goes, there come “showers of blessing,” and “the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

Which of you convinceth Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?—St. John 8:46.

HE Gospels show how much easier it was for Christ to get a friendly hearing among the poor of Galilee, than among the wise and great, who should have been the first to welcome Him. Whether the hearing, glad though it was, that the common people gave Him, was always so fruitful in the long run, is another question. Our Lord warns us that quick hearers have not always depth of earth.

But, as soon as our Lord met the professedly religious at Jerusalem, He met enemies. And yet, if He were what He claimed to be, the Scribes were teaching His law, and the Chief Priests were His ministers. But they cast Him out and killed Him.

As His course at Jerusalem was more difficult,

so His sayings there are harder to follow. We no longer have simple narrative, but deeply argued and spiritual reasoning. But, thoughtfully read, they are mines of instruction and admonition.

What impression do the wise men of Christ's day make upon us? Were they admirable? No, indeed! They were dead conservatives, unable to give new truth a fair hearing. Such dead unbelief and prejudice has little to say for the intellect or souls of those in bondage to it. The Sadducees denied the spiritual because they had no experience of the spiritual. How could they have, when they had lost the organs to perceive it?

Have we less faith in the world to-day than in old times? We hardly believe it. The world has always had some faith, and some unfaith. And the unfaith of to-day is not very unlike that of our Lord's time. Now, as then, there are the commercial spirit, the class spirit, the sensual spirit, the unimaginative, lowered gaze of the routine man. These are opposed to faith. They never mark discoverers. Those who think that scepticism is dignified and intellectual, do not welcome the Gospel now any more than when it came to earth. But the sceptics of our Lord's day do not appear either dignified or worthy.

Education in the best sense is fine. But it does no good to clog the mind with the undigested

results of other men's faith or works. Moses had faith, but minds clogged with traditions tried to quote him against Christ. We need an open soul; we need to avoid all forms of partisanship or bigotry. We need to be warned against degeneracy in the ideals of all organization, either in Church, State, or education.

Our Lord's crucifixion was carried out by organized society. All organizations, unless carefully watched, tend to forget what they are for, and to live for themselves, instead of their original purposes. Our Lord could have been crucified in any country, or in any Church, if the same elements as were in control in Judea could have there had their way. God's people have been always killing prophets.

Our Lord recognized from the first that there was only one outcome of His struggle with the Chiefs of Israel. They could not change their type. He came to save sinners. They could not recognize themselves as sinners, until their sin had gone just as far as it possibly could. It was not only necessary for Christ to die, but that He should be killed by just such people. If we have any tendencies like those of the Jews, we know by observation how far they could carry us. Even the cool scientist can become a persecutor sometimes. There seems nothing really bloodthirsty

about Caiaphas. One just thinks of him as a managing person, who says, "It is expedient," and rubs his hands. There is modern politics for you! Where could such a class get the faculty to judge of sin? But, nevertheless, our Lord submits His claims to just this class, this prejudiced court, and His claims gain power because they were not able to condemn Him fairly. He asks them, as He asks the world, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Let them do their utmost. If they can condemn Him, there will be no need of Pilate.

The Sinlessness of Christ is, with us, a dogma of the Church. We have arguments that convince us. But let us first go outside the Church. What has the world thought about Him? What has history to say? History is neither friend nor foe, it is just a record. The facts are impartial. History has crowned Him King of Virtue.

And then let us note our own impressions from the bare record in the Gospel. The sinless Christ, if He were what He claimed to be, was essentially and fundamentally so. He must have been a sinless child. Little of His childhood is recorded, but nothing inconsistent with the rest of His life. He was subject to His mother and foster father. But they never fully understood Him. If His answer to them when they sought Him in the Temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about

My Father's business?" jars on anyone's feelings, it would be because a note of pertness or impatience was read into it. But it is not really there. After the ministry began, some have felt a measure of courtesy in our Lord's response to His mother at the wedding feast at Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." But a sufficient acquaintance with the manners of the Jews, and the fact that His mother seemed perfectly satisfied with the answer, show that the answer was perfectly courteous.

When our Lord is said to have been angry, it was because He was "grieved at the hardness of men's hearts," and He signalizes that anger by a work of mercy. Surely, no fault can be shown in Him from the sacred records, as looking deeply removes every trace of word or deed that could justly be criticized. The recorded character of Christ stands. No flaw can be found in it, unless it is assumed that He was fundamentally a deceiver. In this case we have the inconceivable contradiction: Here is the teaching of a morality so high that it allows not the slightest deviation from truth ("let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay,"), built on a deception.

Or, if you assume that He was Himself deceived, how can we believe that God intrusted to

a deluded man the revelation of the highest morality the world has ever known? If there is no Christ, is there any God? or is there any righteousness? No, there was no fault. Pilate said so, even while he condemned Him to die, because they sought false witness against Him. If they had had a true witness, they would not have needed false witness. The men who knew Him best, the early apostles, said He was sinless; for they called Him the spotless Lamb of God. And God witnessed to Him; for He raised Him from the dead.

His testimony to Himself was indirect. He claimed sinlessness by submitting Himself to judgment. If we hesitate at His self-assertion, let us remember that His sinlessness belonged to His Gospel. That Gospel would have been radically different, far less of a blessing to us, with that sinlessness left out. We needed it, and we needed His calm assurance of innocence, as well as all other testimony.

What then follows if we take this sinlessness as practically admitted by all? For history has never ceased to admire Christ, whether she crowned Him as Man or God.

Why, first, He is an example. He has "left us an example that we should follow His steps." He has not only *told* us how to be good, He has

showed us how to be good. It is all in the Book. We can see there the concrete instance of how He would face the emergencies and labors and trials of life. He is the New Law, the Way. And He is Life, power to fulfil the law. He will work still in us as He worked before.

Next, He is the Sinless Victim. Such a sacrifice had been sought through the ages. To sacrifice goats for men, bodies for souls, sinners for sin, these were, and must remain, fruitless, except to signify man's longing for reconciliation, or God's mercy in drawing him. But the Perfect for the imperfect, the "Just for the unjust," such could be accepted and avail forever. Such could be accepted, but, because Justice could not condemn Him, sinners did. And His own Will came to make Him our Sacrifice, our Redeemer, and the Author of Everlasting Life.

Further, He is our Head. We are "complete in Him." He has not won for us a fruitless pardon, but restored to us a perfected humanity. Human nature came first good, but untried. He comes now good, and perfectly tried, perfectly experienced, that He may be "Just and the Justifier," Saviour "to the uttermost," because He was "in all points tempted," and hath "tasted death for every man."

But He must be something more than we are,

though as we are. If He were born like us, of human generation, He could not have been sinless. He must be a New Man, untainted by any Fall. We can not believe in the perfection of His life, His sacrifice, His redemption, the finality of His judgment, unless He is all pure, and born, as the Scriptures say, of a pure Virgin. So His sinlessness is that of the God-Man. If we let the Incarnation slip, we may retain certain outward forms and garments of Christianity. But a mere sentiment of admiration will hardly sustain us in dark days. He must be Divine, or He has not saved us, cannot save us.

“If I tell you the truth, why do ye not believe Me?” It may be true that the formal arguments for Christianity have been left incomplete, as some complain. It is a question whether they have. If they had been as full as some men might demand, can it be shown that an overwhelming demonstration of truth would have benefitted us? The evidence we have is a cry to our spirit to awake and answer. It is an appeal to faith. If the stupendous facts were too plain, might they not crush us?

Christ asks for faith. Science will come along by and by, we may well believe, with her demonstrations of things we have long been sure of by faith, but have not demonstrated. While she has

been getting ready, "These all died in faith." Science will prove many things after we are dead. Do not wait. Listen to the Holy Ghost, to the Sinless One. He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

FOR EASTER-TIDE

Purge out, therefore, the old leaven.—1 Cor. 5:7.

F one should visit a wholesale bakery now, he would find that the means in use there for raising bread were almost all chemical. Bread is raised now by generating certain gases which have been found convenient. A man, who had been brought up entirely under these modern methods, might not know what was meant by "leaven!"

Even so the modern housewife uses various kinds of baking powders, which produce chemical raising of the dough. Or, she buys a cake or two of ready, prepared yeast, much different from that prepared and kept with great trouble by our grandmothers, and so raises her bread. She hardly knows what is meant in the Bible by "leaven." What did they use in those old days? Yeast was practically unknown; baking powders were unknown; how did they raise their bread? Well,

in a good many cases they did not raise it at all, except as thorough mixing, a pinch of salt, and the heat, would raise it. They mixed up their flour and water into a batter, and baked it on hot stones, and it came off in the shape of a crinkly, brown cracker, quite palatable.

The Arabs to-day use the same kind of bread, and call it blanket bread, and you may buy it around Passover time in the Jewish quarter of our great cities. There they call it Passover Bread. It is like the unleavened bread of the Bible. But for raised bread, they had discovered that old, sour bread or dough would ferment, and act just like yeast. That is, it would give out the gas, carbonic oxide, which would raise the dough, if a piece of the sour dough were hid in it. And it need be but a very small piece, for, "a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump." Hence we find God's kingdom compared by our Blessed Lord in one place to a seed, "a grain of mustard seed," because, though small, it had within it life, and growth, and power; and in another place to a piece of "leaven," on account of its secret, hidden influence on the whole of society where it is present. An immense number of persons are thus influenced by Christianity and the Church who are quite unconscious of its influence on them.

But, because this old fashioned leaven was in

itself not at all a nice thing, looking, tasting, and smelling the sour mass that it was, St. Paul uses it figuratively in another way, to express the evil influence on society, and especially on the Church, of the bad principles, or bad customs, of even a few of her members.

It was a strict commandment among the Jews not to use any leavened bread at Passover time. They even had a custom of searching their houses thoroughly with candles just before the feast, to find and cast away the least, last scrap of leaven. This was a memorial of the fact that the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt came in a very hurried way. The last great plague upon the Egyptians was the death of all the first born among them, and it was while their enslavers were suffering the first paralyzing effects of grief at such an appalling calamity, that the Israelites made their escape. They had no time to finish making their bread. Those who were making it took their kneading-troughs with the dough in them, before it was leavened, or raised. It takes time to raise bread, and they had no time. And ever afterward, at Passover time, they ate their food with their "loins girded up, and their lights burning," and ate the feast in haste, or, as if in haste, in memory of a hasty deliverance.

Now a new meaning and a new deliverance

have come to us at Passover time. "Christ is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world." He, "by His death hath destroyed Death, and, by His rising again to life, hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." This Passover has all the meaning of the first one, and yet the added meaning of that other great Passover which the Israelites celebrated after their wandering in the wilderness was completed, and they had crossed the Jordan into the promised land. For our Lent is over, and we seek to live in newness of life.

All through Lent we were trying to find out in ourselves the tastes and habits which remind us of leaven, the sour dough, the mass of corruption, of which a very little could leaven the whole lump, especially if it were well hidden. Thus we were properly seeking the secret fault, the hidden trouble which was perverting our lives, and making hypocrites of us. The Germans have some delightfully strong expressions. They call the Biblical leaven simply "sour dough," and the unleavened bread is the "unsoured" bread. This is the kind of life the Christian passover asks us to live, the unsoured, unspoiled life. We are bidden to keep the great feast with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," since "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

The true purpose of the Christian Lent is to help us to get rid of evil propensities which we are not again to resume.

Unfortunately, this is not the way many people look at it. They do, indeed, make some sacrifices, and some effort to overcome besetting sins, as long as Lent lasts. But they go into the fast with the express intention of going back to worldliness after Lent. Now, of course, a good part of a rational Lenten discipline has to do with things which are perfectly innocent. We have gone without good things because we desired, perhaps, to make a Christian economy, and make an offering of the fruits of self-denial. Or, we sought fellowship with Christ through the lack of creature comfort, or, we were trying to teach ourselves to say "No." This is not what we refer to, although it is plain that this age is always too prone to luxury, and is consequently enfeebled in self-mastery and discipline.

But too many people give up only *bad* habits in Lent, and then take them up again after Easter. And this is far worse than if they had never given them up. It turns what may have become a weakness, and a pitiable failing, into a deliberate sin, and makes us miss the whole purpose of reform and of life. The Risen Life is the *new* life. It is a life with changed and uplifted desires. It has

seen the effect of the Resurrection, has begun to appreciate what there is in Heaven for us. It has hope of higher possibilities. It sees that, by union with Christ, one may "die to sin" before one really dies in the body, putting the old life behind one with strong resolution and complete renunciation, by the help which comes from communing with the Risen Lord.

But for this purpose we do need good principles. We do need to give up all delusions of the flesh and spirit. No matter how apparently insignificant the self-delusion, the self-indulgence may be, it may be to us that "little leaven which leaveneth the whole lump," and turns ultimately the whole life sour and bad again.

Can we not try to realize profoundly that all sin is bad? The so called "pleasures of sin" symptomatically considered are equally bad, and have seeds of death. Even the little sin we do not much account of, may grow with unsuspected rapidity into something dangerously destructive, unless we from the start realize its danger. The little leaven leaveneth, soureth the whole lump.

And there is this other view: Why should we not desire Christian perfection? Is there any fear that we can ever be too good? And yet the little fault certainly becomes conspicuous in proportion as virtue is great. Great faults make us forget

little ones, and great virtues throw small faults into prominence. But shall we not nevertheless seek to eradicate *all* faults? Then "purge out the old leaven."

There is another powerful thought which comes from regarding ourselves as bread, unleavened bread. Bread is all any man needs. Christ is the Bread of Life because He is all we need, and has provided means sacramentally by which we can feed on Him. But in a lower sense every man is bread for another man, because we are mutually dependent, mutually influential. It is impossible for the most solitary, self-centered man in the world to live absolutely to himself, though he may easily absorb more than he creates. But good, active men particularly find their joy in the amount of support they can give. Their gladness comes from supporting wife, children, and helping friends, now one, now another.

Hence, as long as we must really be bread, let us be good bread. Our principles, our actions, either elevate or deprecate the community in which we live. Every word we speak carries. Everything we do is weighed. Every time we say goodness is impracticable, we hurt the ideals of some soul. Some persons affect to believe the whole Christian religion who have one standard in business, and yet another in politics, and a third

at home. There is leaven in all of them. And yet the true life demands sincerity and truth; sincerity and truth with God, sincerity and truth with men, sincerity and truth with ourselves. And this last is most important, because we often deceive ourselves most seriously of all, and put ourselves in all sorts of false positions because we are not thus square with ourselves. There is absolutely nothing that can compare in importance with the genuineness of our Christianity. Let us, therefore, seek, all through this Easter-tide, for the effect in and on ourselves of sincerity and truth. Dishonesty is sour, impurity is sour, meanness is sour, bad temper is sour, covetousness is sour, and all will sour everything with which they come in contact. But light and truth, peace, and charity, and self denial, all are sweet things, and make life sweet for ourselves, and all around us. Thus Easter-tide will become a festal season, indeed, because we constantly commune in character with the Risen Lord, and have "set our affections on things above."

THE SEPULCHRE IN THE GARDEN

In the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, wherein was never man yet laid.—St. John 19: 41.

N all the eastern countries gardens have to be made where they can have water. There is not enough rain to depend on that alone. Sometimes the necessary water comes from a long way off. There is the right to use some of what flows by in the channels of a great irrigation system. Sometimes there is a spring or well. And gardens of the sort that depend on a small but sure supply of water are everywhere common in the East, and some of them are very small, and occur where we should hardly expect them.

Christ was crucified in a place called Calvary, or Golgotha, or “the place of a skull.” The rock must have come right up through the surface. We have all seen these outcrops, as they are called, and they seem most unpromising places for a

garden. But often at the foot of small, rocky hills, flowing from deep seams in the rock, is just the place to look for a spring. So here were life and death together. There must have been "living water" near "the place of a skull."

The Greek word for garden has passed into theology with a meaning much greater than it has by itself. It is Paradise. All over Christendom you find how deeply the situation of Christ's tomb has impressed itself upon His followers, and how it shows in the care of our dead. See in the distance a park full of gorgeous shrubs and flowering plants, but it takes no near approach to show the tombs among the lilies. The gardens in our Lord's time were not around the homes, as they lie here. That would have been often impossible. Gardens were not easy to have. They were outside, generally in sight, and near enough to watch over them; but still they were resorts for coolness, for rest and refreshment, as well as places where men labored with their tools and watering devices.

The garden seems to have belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, or, at least he had secured the right to provide himself a tomb there, hewed out of the solid rock. The face of the rock was probably made quite vertical, and the great stone which closed it was, it is thought, round, like a mill-stone, and rolled in a groove, so that when it reached the

bottom of the groove it completely closed the face of the outer chamber of the tomb. It would be easier to roll it into place than away again, if we understand the construction of the tomb. It was but a step from the cross to the tomb, the garden lying just under Golgotha. And so Joseph and Nicodemus, who had both been secret disciples of our Lord, now come out and beg His body and lay it in Joseph's tomb, wrapped in an envelope of precious spices, and leave Him—in Paradise, the garden. His soul went to another Paradise, God's garden, and along with Him went the soul of the penitent thief.

The garden lay quiet over the Sabbath. But in the night that followed the Sabbath it was the scene of the greatest Fact of history. The Divine Sleeper rose from the dead. And after the Sleeper rose the angels came, and the soldiers fled who had watched there. One angel, mighty and strong, rolled away the stone and sat upon it, and others went and sat where the body had been laid; and it was their ministering hands we may believe that wrapped the linen clothes in order before they said to the women, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." When Peter and John afterward could bring themselves to enter, they found, not indeed, the angels as the women had seen, but the beautiful order which they left behind.

We, too, bury our dead out of our sight, because in the order of nature it is necessary to do so. But we love to bury them in a garden. We know that our Saviour's body saw no corruption, and we know that our bodies do see corruption. And so, when we look upon the places where our beloved lie, we do indeed see around us evidences of peace and rest, inscriptions of faith and victory. But we do not look within. Corruption hinders us.

Has then the view of the order within the grave of Christ nothing to say to us, in the different circumstances of our deaths? Yes, indeed; for what is corruption? It is not a pleasant thought, but it need not be a blow to faith or comfort. It is a simple word, meaning merely "a breaking up." As the body of Christ was separated from His soul, so the various elements of our bodies are separated from each other in the grave. But the process is not disorderly. It follows the laws of Nature which are the laws of God.

When the seed that is to "bring forth much fruit" is hidden in the ground, it moulders away, just as surely as do our bodies, and gives us in one process the mystery of life, and the mystery of death. There is no disorder in the grave. There is no loss. What you hide from your own eyes you do not hide from God. You scatter things

throughout the universe, but they never get far from God. The last breath of a man goes straight to God, though the man freeze to death on the Labrador or fall in the Sahara; all winds that sweep away the failing breath bear it home.

Turn now to the garden outside. This is beautiful. Is a dead body beautiful? It has a certain beauty not in life, lasting a brief space, because death wipes away the traces of conflict always going on while we live. Peace always seems to touch us first, after we go. But this is brief. Look now at this seed; is it beautiful? Not unless you see things deep. It is small, weak, insignificant, apparently dead. But what are these roses, lilies, vine blossoms? What is the source of all this beauty and fragrance? It has all come from buried things, from little seeds that seemed dead, and then irreparably dead. It is the resurrection of the dead. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory:" mortality has been swallowed up in life."

Take up a handful of the churchyard mould. Under this we shall sleep. But what says the Psalmist? "My flesh also shall rest in hope." Take a strong glass and look at this handful. It seems even to be alive. What is this that is cover-

ing the fall sowing? Is it soil? May we not call it hope? There would be no hope if there were no covering.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” that you may learn from its heavenly order the sense of God’s power to keep His promises, so that you, too, may rest in hope.

“I will lay me down in peace and take my rest”; “when I awake after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it.”

DELIVERANCES

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what Thou hast done in their time of old.—Psalm 44:1.



HEN the Jubilee Singers from the South first made us familiar with the real negro melody, as distinguished from the light songs so popular before the Civil War, men became conscious of a new impression. It was undeniably grotesque, what they then listened to, but it showed genuine religious feeling and a rude dignity, at which many were surprised. It is not so many years ago that a leading European composer, already most favorably known in this country for his sacred music, came over the sea to us, and examined this genuine negro music with great interest. Dr. Dvorak, to whom is the reference, is said to have prophesied that if any peculiar school of music ever rose up in America, it would be

founded upon the negro music of the old slave days.

One of these melodies comes to mind in beginning to consider this subject. It ran, as the Hampton students used to sing it:

“The Lord delivered Moses,
The Lord delivered Moses,
The Lord delivered Moses,
Why can’t He deliver me?”

This is a modern and simple expression similar in all respects to the petition in the English Litany, where the words of the forty-fourth Psalm are used as a prayer for the whole Church:

“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us the noble works which Thou didst in their time, and in the old times before them.”

Ans. “O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for Thine honour.”

Right through this runs the same feeling as in, “Why can’t He deliver me?”

Have we, in our greater wisdom, gotten past things like these? The Conception of Nature, through which and above which the Lord delivered Moses, Gideon, and other worthies, told about in the Epistle to the Hebrews as living in days of faith, was formerly very different from that which

is now held ; but does this make any real, necessary difference in what we may call the fundamentals of a practical theology ? Let us examine.

It was a very simple age, mechanically considered, when the angel of God appeared to Gideon to tell him that he must be the deliverer of Israel from Midianitish oppression. Israel, too, was perhaps the least mechanical of all nations. It was always so. The line of Cain was more mechanical than the line of Seth, the chosen one, and the Israelites had to go to the Philistines to find a blacksmith. This is why we still call the man who translates everything into terms of dead practicality, and has no use for the idealist or seer, a Philistine. Gideon was doing his threshing in a way now strange to us, on a dry, smooth dirt floor, with hardly the idea of a tool about the work. He was driving oxen around the floor upon the straw, possibly with some kind of a drag, and possibly relying mainly upon their feet to loosen the grain. To him appeared the heavenly messenger. And when he seeks a sign from God that he is actually the chosen one, he seeks a very simple one, very direct, implying the nearness and direct providence of God to his mind. He put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor, and asked that there might be "dew upon the fleece and none on the floor"; and again, that there

might be “dew on the floor and none on the fleece”; and these signs were given. Thus he doubted not of his direction.

Is there anything in the discoveries of the present age to weaken our faith in the power, the will, and the reality in the dealings of Him whom we call God with humanity, and individual men?

For we live in a very mechanical age. The modern Gideon when he threshes to-day, uses other and wonderful means. He draws, by its own traction, his steam engine and threshing machine to his field, where already his combined reaper and binder has done its work, gathering the harvest of a square mile of wheat without a man's hand to anything but a lever, or a line. These machines are marvels of ingenuity; cog, and wheel, lever and belt, ratchet and bevel, are all at work, and doing almost as wondrously as the angel did with Gideon's sacrifice. Man and his machine have become so wonderful that—what has become of God? We might answer that the wheat would sufficiently testify to Him; but let us get to the bottom of our mechanics.

At the same time that man is so greatly developing his own tools, a greater realization of the mechanics of the universe has surely grown upon his mind. His telescope has brought countless worlds close to his sight and ken, about which he

speaks in terms of millions of miles and thousands of years, yet has reduced them all to terms of mathematics. He understands all their curves, and cycles, and they are like the lines which he draws on his blackboards, or text-book pages. He looks down into his mines, and finds nature working there in the same forms which are axiomatically forced upon his own mind by that power which made it, however made. He goes into an iron mine, and finds a crystal of iron, which made itself—if you listen to child's talk; but which the mathematician made—if you listen to reason—a perfect octahedron; yet all its edges are flattened just a little and just alike, save where perhaps some overlapping pressure has made just enough inequality to emphasize the regularity of the rest. They call it magnetite, whether accurately or not. By any name it is wonderful.

Then as man's telescope, so also his spectroscope, and his microscope, have revealed to him the wonders of nature. Geology and astronomy both have changed his chronology, and put back far beyond any human computation, the beginnings of things we see. Has not all this driven the Creator far away from us? Must not His initiatory work have been so long ago that He has ceased to take knowledge of the motes which people this insignificant planet?

But would not all this world get strangely out of order, like the best human machines, without Him? Why is the rainbow the same in the little fly's wing, as on the sunny side of the nimbus? Why is it always there when there's light enough? Why are the lilies of the field still worth considering?

In an old picture of the weird sisters, The Fates, one is seen holding the primitive spinner, the distaff, and twisting the thread without a wheel. What a change to the spinning-jenny! In a modern cotton mill one sees a child tending a thousand threads. Her hand starts the frame in motion, and controls the belt; her watchful eye is upon the moving frame. If a thread breaks, she springs and checks the motion, and ties it up. It needs somebody to watch. And as we look at man's mechanics, the same passage of Ezekiel is suggested to us, "The spirit of the living creature is in the wheels."

They tell us that the more machinery we have, the more power we need; and that is so. But when we see enormous lines of shafting whirling, we know that the power must be there; and when we behold exceedingly intricate machinery, like a type-casting machine, we know that it isn't the machine we admire, but the mind that thought it out. And no matter how vast, and strong, and

far-reaching, the mechanical operations, the man must not only start them but stand by them; for the man is more wonderful than the machine. The man controls the law of the machine. He does not break its law, but he serves himself by its law.

And thus the pious man sees that God controls, works in and through His own machine. We glorify God because He seems to us as near as in the old times before us He must have seemed, and infinitely more powerful than when men appreciated the infinite so much less than we do now. Once we said: "He holds the seas in the hollow of His hands." Now, were we to write of His power, we would say, He holds in His constant thought the atoms and the inter-astral spaces; while He loves the souls of men. Yes, He is powerful. He is Mighty, "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father."

So, since man became a mechanician it is fitting that his growth in this department should lead him to a fresh revelation of God. To the simple man comes the direct revelation; to the complex man, God may still speak more directly, even, than we can describe, but He speaks in every way with more power, with more majestic mind.

But some who have studied deeply may say, Are there not flaws in the universe? And, par-

ticularly, are there not flaws in man? Not, merely, in what we call his moral make-up, but in his physical make-up? What are these odd, disused organs, survivals of some former stage, unless evidences that nature was groping; that her pathway was hedged up here, and opened there, as if she were repenting of her mistakes, and seeking for some excellence yet unknown?

It seems that there is also an analogical answer here. Nature is not *merely* mechanical! Mechanics and morals are inseparably related. Man does not make his sense of the moral; it comes to him from without, though it finds an answer in him. Morals seem to flow on around us just as Nature's laws do; through us indeed, but also around us, so that modern thinkers postulate "a stream of tendency not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." Man, then, as moral, and as a physical part of a physical creation which is also moral, has to face this curious experience of life and mentality: that we only acquire a real grasp of knowledge and virtue through experiment. We can only enter exactly into another man's knowledge through his experiences. This accounts for the unfruitful character of many traditions. They are not touched with life until something happens to give them reality.

So the doctrine of the Fall of man has been

sometimes paradoxically stated to have been a *Fall Upward*; though whatever truth there is in the paradox is through the operation of an overruling Providence. (There could have been a religious experience, without an experience of sin.) But, nevertheless, the experience of sin has worked very strongly upon many minds, and one arising and coming to his Father, has to come to a home, and a sense of home, which those who have constantly abode there have never realized. This is what Tennyson doubtless means when he sings—

“That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

That was written before evolution was in the air, though Tennyson and Darwin were, nevertheless, friends.

The physical and moral are so closely related (with modern cranial physiology it is going to be impossible to separate them, and why not? What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder)—that we ought to be prepared to see this same law of experimental approach to truth come out in both. The apparent mistakes of nature need not, therefore, confound us. We look upon them as showing that, constituted as we are, we can not merely be told the truth, *we must find it out*. Faith is mightier than facts. Facts may lie heavy,

but faith moves. The north pole no longer stirs the adventurous since it has been found.

So God *can* help, and the indications of our nature are that He *will* and *does* help. Remedies are all around us in nature.

Then, as we come down to the declarations of the Gospel for corroboration, and turn to Him whom we believe to have been the chief of all Revealers of the Divine character, we find Christ answering the leper who did not doubt God's power, but only His will, thus: The leper cried, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." And our Lord, acting as representative of God, answered, "I will, be thou clean," showing His exceeding earnestness to impress this willingness upon all who should hear the story, by even going so far as to break with a ceremonial law. If it had been possible for Him to have contracted defilement by touching the leper, He must have done so. But He was not defiled; the leper was cleansed. And St. Paul echoes this Will of His Divine Master when he writes, "This is the Will of God, even your sanctification."

The next and most important question is, *Does He help?* It is probable that there would be several answers to this question. But assuming the character and integrity of witnesses, one thing is always demanded in our courts: that they should

know the things about which they testify. A mere statement that one has never had a given experience, does not weigh against the statement of men of reputation and sanity that they have themselves experienced such and such things. That three men saw the prisoner at the bar at such a time and place, will be hard to outweigh through testimony from many that they did not see him. So a Christian is alert in many ways in which the man of the present is not. He has his eyes open, because he is looking for God and Christ. He is taught to find Christ in the crowded city, or alone upon the house-top. He is trained to listen both to silence and voices. He believes in the Unseen. He does not think it unphilosophical, supposing there is a God, to observe in Him the chief agent, in all things that happen, rather than to lay the great stress upon the inferior agency, or the mechanical process. To him, what matters it *how* God does it, *if* He does it, save as for food for admiration, because "He doeth all things well."

The Christian man is full of faith in special, in overruling, in remedial providences. He therefore believes in prayer, because God is standing by. The Lord, as the psalmist says, "shall stand by" His saints, "and deliver them, because they put their trust in Him." When a man believes, as taught by St. Paul, that his very body is a

temple of the Holy Ghost, it is not far to a special providence, not far from a God who *can, will* and *does help*.

We must, of course, expect to have the objection from lack of experience numerously urged. In the multiform divisions of modern life, however, we ought not to lack simple illustrations of the illogical character of this. The story is told of a great traveller who was relating to the dwellers in Central Africa, tales of his experiences in other lands, and giving many descriptions of life as it is in the Europe of to-day. They accepted all that he said, or seemed to, until he told them that, in the country he came from, there was a time of the year when all the rivers became so hard that men could walk on them. To this their chief replied: "Now we know you are lying. We were disposed to believe you before, but this proves that you have been lying all the time." And all this for a matter as simple as ice!

Now St. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed." Who can testify against him? Who can say anything against the Christian who echoes the Psalmist, "Praised be the Lord, for He hath heard the voice of my humble petition?"

Let us keep up the traditions of our fathers. They who have testified what God did in their days have been an illustrious line, worthy of all

admiration. Thank God for the men, as well as for the deeds. Let us be the men they were. Let us not think of God as outside the sky line, the star line. Let us not think of Him as an unknown, outside the limits of the known. And not as our first parents tried to hide from One who was "walking in their garden in the cool of the day," let us, confessing our sins and imploring His help, fly to meet Him who can, will and does help His children, in secret places of the soul, in the high places of nature, and in the assembly of the faithful, because "He is good, and His mercy endureth forever."

CHRISTMAS-TIDE

THE LEADING OF THE CHILD

A little Child shall lead them.—Isaiah 11: 6.



S there anything born so helpless as a young child? And yet is there anything so powerful? It is true that there are different kinds of power. There is the power that a strong man exercises when he lifts great weights, or engages in athletic contests, wrestling, boxing, and the like. But this is a single man's power, and cannot affect anything far from the place where he stands. And there is the other power that can compel obedience, not only of the arm to the single will, but of many wills to one. One is simple physical force, but the other is something vastly higher and more effective.

A king may be a young man, not by any means grown to his full vigor, yet the arm and the weapon

of every man in the kingdom belongs to him, and, were he a child, his power might be even greater in a certain way. For against a young man or a half-grown boy a man might rebel, who could not lift his finger to resist the imperious will of a helpless babe.

When a child comes to us for the first time, it becomes the master of the house. And where husband and wife have not been well agreed, and where the will of the other was hard and bitter for the wife to yield to, or the husband to satisfy, where a disrupted home has been threatened, and all the wisdom of friends or persuasion of the Church has not been able to avert the threatened breach, into that home has come a child, and with baby fingers has drawn together cords that no one else could draw, and with a soft hand held down an earthquake.

There is something else in nature, too, that shows the power of the child. Where do those wonderful stories come from, like the story of Romulus and Remus, the wolf-suckled twins who founded Rome? Is that a pure invention, or did things like that ever happen? Things like that have happened, wise men tell us, many times. The wolf-mother would have attacked or fled from a man, but she obeyed and nourished the child. Little children have played with entire

safety with many sorts of wild animals; a child may be made the absolute lord of a great dog which could pull down a stag. If, then, these wild beasts which Isaiah's prophecy tells about are ever to be brought to peace, if ever they are to share in mutual peace the food of those that would be otherwise their prey, if the enemy is ever to be tamed, it must be done by the compelling power of innocent, dependent, and helpless love. The world cannot be made good by force, but it can be blessed everywhere by the power of the Child Jesus.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem, the Father of all put His hand upon the heart of the world. The dumb domestic beasts who surrounded the manger must all have been glad to see His Son. They always are. No finger would have been raised against the peace of that manger had it not been for Herod, perhaps the most unnatural monster of which history knows. Had he been but like a lion, or a bear, or a leopard, or even a venomous serpent, he might have been tamed; but he was the foe of his own flesh, and his own children had been put to death by him. There was no name fierce or hateful enough whereby to describe him. But over the rest of the world Christ began to reign from the manger, from His mother's arms.

The gift of the Saviour in this form also shows the amazing confidence and trust God places in man. Every child that is born is some mark of this confidence, because it is God's child, too, lent to us. But there God put His Only Begotten into the hands of little understanding men, to nurse for Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son." He gave Him, indeed, to die for us, but first of all to live for us, and the giving of the Infant was a step in redemption. To a holy soul it seems to have been enough. The benefits of Christ's death are not denied to those who loved Him and yielded themselves to His charm, even before the Redemption which came by His blood. The babe was holy Simeon's Saviour. "Mine eyes," he said, "have seen Thy Salvation."

Then if the Saviour had come from heaven as the angels come, in the fulness of their beauty, without coming in through the doorway of all human experience, what would the children have done for a Saviour? For we are saved through the experience of the Lord. If He had never been a boy, how could He be to the tempted boy what He can be now? Perhaps it wasn't so much that *He* needed what sympathy could bring to the help of His saving work, but oh, *we* needed to know that He had first tasted every man's cup, and laid

His hand upon every man's work. It was of God's great mercy that Christ could be born a child.

And how, without this gift, could we have learned what we now know of the character of God? Men had been so afraid of God that they were afraid to know Him at all. They were afraid of Him, though they had no true fear of Him. They were afraid of His presence, when they ought to have feared His absence. But Christ is laid in His mother's arms, and offered to the sight of wise men and shepherds, and all are taught by this spectacle that God is meek and gentle, pure and holy, whose Kingdom is the kingdom of Love. Christ was in all His ministry the Revelation of the Father, but He was that as well in infancy.

Why could not this Divine Child have saved those babes who died for Him by Herod's sword? He did save them. He had given them life, a life most brief because of Herod's guile, and then an entrance into eternal life, perhaps as unconscious at first as their entrance into this life, perhaps not more painful. One cry, and then came life for ever with the Child of Bethlehem.

As God is, so must we be. We must never outgrow our childhood in God. No man, however so old, can really be old in God's sight. May we pray that the wisdom of this world, the hardness

of life's experiences, may never prevent our child-like attitude toward our Heavenly Father.

And in all our work for God and men, whether it seem to be our work alone, or work in the unity of the Church, may we never forget the power of gentleness. May we realize that regeneration must precede everything in the spiritual life, that no amount of apparent success amounts to anything without love, that there is no failure if there be love, that true love will keep us innocent, that gentleness is the method of power. "Thy gentleness that made me great."

What is it that the world really wants? Is there anything lacking that cannot be spiritually expressed? Do we not desire to know that our happiness and life are dear to Him who made us, that He always will send us peace, if we are men of good will?

The true relations of family life are to us not only a great blessing, but full of instruction. Our part in them is far from perfect. Our fatherhood sinful and incomplete. Even in pious Mary, Jesus had something to forgive. One may sometimes think our children are more forgiving than we are. May God show us all, by the contemplation of the Babe of Bethlehem, the conditions of holy family life. And looking upon children as His special Christmas representatives, especially

poor children who find little room or a poor welcome here, let us strive to make the Saviour welcome, and rejoice as He does in the happiness of the tender, innocent, and young.

CONSECRATION

That Thine eyes may be open toward this house day and night, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My Name shall be there.—1 Kings 8:29.



HERE are two services in our Prayer Book called services of Consecration: the Consecration of a Bishop, and the Consecration of a Church building.

Another service, the Office for the Holy Communion, contains a Prayer of Consecration, without which a priest never attempts to celebrate the Blessed Sacrament. These are the most authoritative documents from which to see what is meant in this Church by the word Consecration.

In the order in which these services occur in the Prayer Book, we find ourselves naturally most familiar with the service for the Holy Communion, which is for everybody to look forward to; for no penitent person is excluded. Whereas, one may well live a long life without ever seeing a Bishop

consecrated, or a church thus set apart more than once or twice.

In the Office for the Holy Communion, we first set apart bread and wine which, although we may have labored to make or earn them, we recognize and acknowledge to be the gifts of God, and place them on the altar as an offering at the same time with the other gifts which we dedicate to God, and His service. Once offered, these elements no longer belong to us, except to use in accordance with the Divine institution. According to our Lord's own saying, "The altar sanctifies the gift." That is to say, the altar is God's: it, in some way, signifies His Presence, His Name, and His right. With an invisible God, the Name becomes the most important symbol, and an object like the altar, which assumes to be no image or likeness of anything, is a constant reminder of God's Presence and claims, and presses home Sacrifice to our souls every time we behold it.

After we have presented the Bread and Wine, and have endeavored to prepare ourselves by confession, absolution, prayer, and praise, for the great Act which is to follow, we, through the appointed minister of the Sacrament, say the Prayer of Consecration, by means of the recital of our Lord's words of Institution, identifying this Bread and Wine with all His ineffable sacramental pur-

poses, and putting them ministerially outside the category of common things. And we further invoke over them the benediction of Almighty God, that they may become to us all that our Saviour intended, and communicate us in His own way with His Body and Blood, and make us fully partaker of all those good things which He obtained for us through His Passion.

After this is done, we never permit any portion of what has been thus set apart, and blessed, to go back to ordinary uses. As far as we can, we have, by God's assistance, fixed its condition as Holy. It is reverently distributed, reverently consumed, any portion remaining reverently replaced upon the altar until the conclusion of the service, and then reverently consumed, not as a new sacrament, but as a conclusion to what has been done, that no possibility of irreverent treatment of a consecrated Thing may cloud the rite and its fulfilment.

It is not necessary to emphasize any particular theory of the Holy Communion in order to make clear the Church's mind as to what she means in this Consecration. Things are what they are because God made them so. We do not make them better, or worse, by anything we personally do, or attempt. But they are always in their Creator's power. He is the Real Consecrator, and our part in it is through obedience and prayer, prayer which

has the promises. The two chief steps are the separation, and the special hallowing through Divine Benediction, which adds whatever sacred properties as may be necessary for the rite.

In the Consecration of a Bishop, both these ideas are plainly to be seen. The man designed for the office has been long separated from the common life of men. His occupation, responsibilities, means of support, all indicate separation. His amusements are curtailed, even among innocent things. He must be good, do good, and not let his good be evil-spoken of. He must "avoid the appearance of evil," as well as the evil. Not that he does not touch the common lot as few others can; for the common lot is sorrow, and he is dedicated to sympathy as much as to truth; but no one can deny that the ministerial life is a separate one, and that through its separation comes much of its power.

Then he has been gradually admitted, by steps or degrees to certain uncommon functions, which he exercises not by his own mind or invention, not for his own purposes, but strictly according to the terms of his commission. And these things are such that it seems impossible to say whether they would have any validity if voluntarily performed, without the special commission which the Church is empowered by her Founder to continue and per-

petuate. The question will remain no matter which side of it we prefer to espouse. The safe position is the historic one.

And hence it has been always believed that the man who is ordained is not only separated and limited, but something is done to him which is indelible, and cannot be undone. This is sometimes called The Grace of Orders. It means on one side that God powerfully acts with His minister to validate his functions, and to sustain his words and deeds, so far as true to the Divine will; but further this, that every right act, to govern, to administer, being also a burden and a care—and this more than ever in Divine things—God will give every one of His faithful ministers all the grace and help they need to be better men, in spite of their added temptations and difficulties, more than if they had failed to heed their higher calling. Of necessity, the minister of Christ has to try to do many things which others may not think of doing: he has to aim high; and he runs, humanly speaking, more chance of failure in his ideals, or from his ideals, than the man who seeks no more than respectable performance.

But God helps those whom He calls. Not that they do not fail sometimes, but God does not fail them. His word to them is the same as that spoken to encourage Moses: "Certainly I will be

with thee.” The minister of Christ must remain human, very human, but he must enter, as God would have him, into the capabilities and character of a new world and a new man.

And then the service for the Consecration of a Church. Still we have the idea of separation. We are setting something apart which, architecturally, indeed, is not fitted for any or many other purposes than that which we intend, but could be changed or modified, and so applied. Though in material it is the usual building of the region, we have remembered God and eternity, and have separated it. It is not for every innocent use, if common. It is separate, and belongs to God and the soul, to the truth and its proclamation. It is no longer ours to do as we please with it—it is ours, however, as the children of God, a place in which to meet Our Father. Whatever change may be connected with the thought of consecration following this separation, we do not think of it as mysterious, as in the case of a sacrament, or a person. But there is this change: we can never escape from the force of association, more especially if this association be personal, and, most of all, if the association call up something Divine.

“The altar sanctifies the gift.” Your mother’s picture is just so much paper with the sun’s handiwork thereon, or canvas and oil, and the artist’s

success. But it is more to you than to the man who painted it. It is in a manner holy.

Go in thought to a mother's treasure-house, and see the baby's shoe, the lock of fair hair, the things intrinsically worthless but, to her, priceless; it is what remains to quicken the pulse, and bring back the memory and form of those gone, but not forgotten.

Round an old consecrated church cluster memories of sacraments and warnings, experiences of penitence and hope, vows to God and vows to man, love, tenderness, and aspiration.

Visible memorials are there in stone, brass, or storied pane; sacred emblems of the passion and victory of Christ. The names of old and new saints are there displayed, or easily recalled. But chiefly, there is the thought, This is my Father's house. His Name is there. His mysterious Presence is there. Not that we can ever be absent from Him, but He does, in special ways, put Himself before us, and make places sacred to His worship and revelation. And where He is specially thought of as present, there also is the thought of Him, not as alone in a distant universe, but as surrounded by His "ministering spirits," "the armies of heaven," the priests of His inner sanctuary, as represented to us in St. John's Revelation.

"The Lord is in His Holy Temple." I know that means primarily more than appears. Had man erected no temple, still it would be true. His character is temple enough. Where He is realized, no visible fabric is needed or much heeded. But it is, nevertheless, true here. Let us keep silence. Let the world be hushed. Let not passion speak, or worldly wisdom raise its voice. Let God speak to us, and then let what we say be the words of penitence, worship, and love, few words, but sincere; the words which our Mother has taught us to say, when we meet our Heavenly Father.

"My Name shall be there." Father, Saviour, Divine Helper, Jesus Christ, sanctify Thy Name in us. Save us from every thought which may dim in our minds the lustre of Thy Presence. Be Thou a hiding place for us. May the church be ever a shelter where we may find Thee, the answer to our prayers, and the assurance of Thy love. Grant that men may love it, seek it, and find the door as open as Thy mercy.

May we emulate Thy Great High Priest, Thy Son, our Saviour, who was Holy, Harmless, Undefiled, and Separate from sinners. Help us to be separated from sin; then consecrate us, O God, in time, for eternity, to dwell forever in Thy Holy Temple.

THE LORD'S PRAYER



HE literary perfection of the Prayer Book services has its drawbacks. We are insensibly tempted to dwell too much on the outward form. And then, our familiarity with the beautiful phrases is apt to carry us along faster than we really ought to go, in order really to *work* through the service. For, of course, every time you repeat the prayers of the Church, you are supposed to be, not only worshipping, but working. For this reason we ought to go to our prayers with as much self-recollectedness as a machinist beginning to operate his machine. He knows that the thing is not only serviceable, but dangerous. His mind has to be on his lathe, and the work in it, or it may be spoiled in an instant. And he has to spend, from time to time, considerable work on the tool itself, to keep it in order, to correct its adjustment, to get, as we say, "the hang of it" so perfectly, that it

will work for him like an extension of his own will into a longer arm, with more delicate skill.

The most perfect thing we have in the service is the Lord's Prayer. It is just possible that you do not think so, that is, you do not really think so, but you know you ought to. And you would hardly dare admit that you have lost some appreciation of it, because it would make you seem to yourself unorthodox. In other things we often have our off days, when we are dissatisfied with ourselves; so, it is not surprising if, in our religious life we sometimes have to recognize that there is something wrong with our taste or feeling.

If the Lord's Prayer has become less to us than it ought to be, is there anything we can do? Do we need to go to a doctor for the spiritual dulness from which we are suffering? No, the remedy is right in our own hands. All it needs is a little time, a little thought, a little concentration, a little reverential composure of the spirit to the purposes of prayer.

The prayer has suffered, not more from its rapid rendition in public worship but from its almost universal use, at least by our Church people, in their private prayers, which are apt to be hurried and made as short as possible, and just handled the way a conductor punches a commuter's ticket. We are apt to be prejudiced

against the rosary, just because Roman Catholics use it; but really, we fall into exactly the same false way of praying as may go with telling the beads, only with us there is a good deal more room between the beads.

Now for our simple remedies. First, stop and say, What is this that I am trying to do? This is *Prayer*, an attempt to come into Communion with God. Therefore, I must not try to read a book and listen to a lecture at the same time. I therefore need detachment, except that I ought to think, first, not only of prayer in general, and of the Person whom I am approaching, but specially *why I* am coming to-day.

Then next, this prayer is *the Lord's Prayer*. It is given as the perfect model. The separate petitions are complete in themselves. They are like chapter headings under which we may, if we have time, group our special needs. They are, further, a restraint to keep us from wild thoughts and desires; for there are many things we have no right to ask for. And many of the difficulties that men find in believing in prayer come from not recognizing its limitations. Christian prayer is more powerful because of these limitations.

Then take the prayer slowly, petition by petition, and see what it means to you, and afterward put it together again in different combinations.

You know what a kaleidoscope is. And you know that it gives you many combinations of the same materials, and it is difficult to say which is the most beautiful. But the things wouldn't combine at all unless they were perfect in detail. This is something like the Lord's Prayer.

In Dean Stanley's last days somebody asked him about prayer, and he replied that he had almost stopped saying any prayer but the Lord's Prayer, going over it very slowly, petition by petition. And this illustrates the fact that even advanced and proficient persons in any walk of life have to stop from time to time, and go back to first principles. First principles contain everything else.

These words are not intended to supply you with the thought that might properly come with meditative use of each petition. Some of the benefit would be lost if the thinking should be done in advance for you. But if, at first, the result seems barren, try reading over a psalm, a canticle, an epistle or gospel from the Prayer Book, and then see how much easier it is to say the Lord's Prayer.

Then comes putting the petitions together again, and perhaps we can give here a few of the results of our kaleidoscope. It will perhaps yield other beautiful results to our own mental revolving

of the careful words of our Lord. The method, or something like it, was used ofttimes in the monastic services, before the Reformation. They would take a part of the psalm they were singing, or of some other psalm, and use it as a refrain all through, after every verse. It often made things very much more beautiful. They called it "farcing," a word that now is only used in cookery, and means a sort of stuffing, or dressing.

Begin then with the idea of Fatherhood as the controlling thought. Using it as a sort of refrain, the Lord's Prayer would go something like this: Our Father, Who art in Heaven ("My Father's House has many mansions"), Hallowed be Thy Name (the Father's Name; "Holy Father, Great Creator"). Thy Kingdom come (the Father's Kingdom); Thy Will be done (the Father's Will), on earth as it is in Heaven (by the children as well as by the angels). Give us this day our daily bread (the children's bread); and forgive us our trespasses (Thy children's trespasses), as we forgive those who trespass against us (for they are our brothers and our flesh). And lead us not into temptation (Carry us, Father, rather than lead us over the rough places), but deliver us from evil (Thy children fly to Thee). For Thine is the kingdom (the Father's Kingdom), the power (the Father's power), and the

glory (the Father's glory), for ever and ever (Father Eternal!). Amen. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous fleeth unto it and is safe."

Or, use the first petition as the controlling thought, Hallowed be Thy Name. Then think God's Name is hallowed by the doing of His will. "Do all for the glory of God." God's Name is hallowed in giving us our daily bread; His merciful Providence is part of His glory. God's Name is hallowed by the Victory over Temptation, in the Triumph of Righteousness. "With His own right hand and with His Holy Arm hath He gotten Himself the victory."

Or, lastly, take the Will of God as a text. We are too apt to think of resignation to the Will of God as implying that it provides for us nothing but discipline. Charlotte Elliott's beautiful hymn,

"My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,"

is an invalid's hymn. We could suggest other verses for a more cheerful, full and true view of life:

- 1 My God, my Father, by Thy Will
Green wave the groves on yonder hill;
The stars Thy heavenly Law fulfil:
Thy Will be done.

- 2 My God, my Father, we confess
Before the world Thy holiness;
With inward grace Thy children bless:
Thy Will be done.
- 3 My God, my Father, daily bread
Before Thy waiting world is spread.
'Tis by Thy Will that we are fed;
Thy Will be done.
- 6 My God, my Father, mercy, too,
Comes every morning, fresh and new.
Thou dost forgive the wrongs we do:
Thy Will be done.
- 7 My God, my Father, in the field
Where danger lurks, Thou art our Shield.
Praise we the Will our souls hath healed;
Thy Will be done.
- 8 My God, my Father, Thou our King,
Thy power, Thy glory now we sing.
Come, and Thy blessed Kingdom bring.
Thy Will be done.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

“The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.”

 T is sometimes said, nowadays, that we make a mistake in reading the Mosaic Law in Church, or in looking upon it as a proper and useful part of the Catechism. This objection is made on somewhat technical grounds, by people who recognize that we are the better for having good laws, and knowing about them; but they think that the Mosaic Law is antiquated, and has outlived its authority. Now the way in which we use the Mosaic Law in our system is answer enough to these objections. We do not use it by itself, but with a very clear Christian construction, indeed, with the very words of Christ Himself about the older Law added to the recital of that Law.

We make it, I think, very clear that we put a completely Christian construction upon what we

recite, and that, apart from the Christian construction, we would not use the commandments as we do.

The New Testament is full of applications, explanations, and paraphrases of the older Law. The Sermon on the Mount, and many other teachings of our Lord and His apostles, might be quoted.

There is just one point, however, about the way in which the Prayer Book refers to the original authority of the commandments, which needs some comment. That is, we continue there to claim that these commandments really came from God, and at the time they were said to have come from Him. This does not mean that they had no authority before they were published at the time of the Exodus. They had, at least some of them, almost universal authority. But it was, to speak reverently, necessary that they should be republished *as a system* in connection with Jehovah's claim to be the absolute Lord of Righteousness. Religion and Morality are not in any of the old religions connected with the same closeness as they are in the religion of the Israelitish people. In other words, it is a great discovery that the duty towards God and the duty towards the neighbor are two tables of *the same Law*.

In the descriptions of the giving of the Law which we read in Exodus, there is a halo of glory

and mystery about the whole story. The two tables are said to have been written with “the Finger of God.” Whatever I believed about this in my early studies, I should now say that this statement does not necessarily mean that man had no hand in the preparation of these tables. They were, at least, brought to light by Moses. They were in his hands when first seen. His employment *to do the writing* would not anymore contradict the Divine authorship, than his employment *to bring out the tables to public view*. Indeed, our Lord furnishes us a valuable commentary on the words, “The Finger of God,” by using them in controversy with the Pharisees as a name for the Spirit of God. Hence, to say a thing was done by the “Finger of God,” is no more than saying that it was done by Divine inspiration or Divine authority.

The universal conscience at any rate endorses this ancient law, though it certainly did need the illumination which Christ threw upon it.

The improper use of the ten commandments overlooks that they were accompanied, at the time they were given, by *a large amount of other legislation* which *enforced, illustrated and explained* them. In every age and community they have to be enforced, illustrated, and explained, and their *spirit* made clear as against a too literal reception.

of them: not that in speaking of them as sometimes taken too literally we would justify in any sense their rejection. Literalness makes for a *more limited* and *restricted* reception than does spirituality. "Thou shalt not kill," taken with *absolute* literalness would not exclude any bodily injury less than killing; "Thou shalt not steal," would not include certain kinds of artistic fraud, where the personal responsibility is concealed almost from the worker of it.

Every age, therefore, has a right and is even bound, to put its commandments into such other form, not less explicit than the ten words, as will make the spirit of the law perfectly plain. Christ turned the ten words into *two*, which enormously extended their range. St. John says about the same in his gospel, where he records that our Lord gave an eleventh commandment, just like the two in scope. There is an interesting story in one of Gilbert Parker's tales, where the French Half Breed, Pretty Pierre, says he has just three necessary principles: "Thou shalt keep the faith of food and blanket," "Thou shalt judge with the mind of ten men and the heart of one woman," "Thou shalt pity the sorrows of thine own wife." I do not say that these exhaust the real law. They cannot, for they are the code of an undisciplined and self-willed man, but they make not nearly so

meager a set of principles as is implied by being only three. A man who would thoroughly and thoughtfully live up to them, would probably live up to more good principles than he set out to hold; for all these three are kindly and wise.

But the burning need is that we should never yield to the temptation *to make duty less broad than it is*; that we should never refuse to advance to meet it as it enlarges. For duty does unquestionably enlarge, as we live our life, and learn of love and what love really is. The love of a child is not the love of a man. The love of a lover is not the love of a husband or a father, and neither one is that of a woman. And the love of a Christian father is different from what it would be if he were not a Christian, supposing his Christianity to be real to the point of sacrifice. We can get almost too familiar with our formularies. The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect prayer, and the most misused prayer, I had almost said the most *unused prayer*, for it is said over thousands of times without any movement of the heart or will. Yes, a man will say it, and then, because he can not remember whether he has said it or not, will say it over again. This is one reason why we ought to be careful not to say our public service too fast.

And this is why it does us good to try to put

the commandments in other words, for fear we should get to thinking that we had really perfectly kept them. The rich young man, whom our Saviour is said to have loved, thought he had kept them, and was made to see what *he really was*, by our Lord requiring of him *complete charity* and faith enough to make a *perfect surrender of his life*. If God's law means anything, it cannot possibly mean less than perfect charity and complete surrender. Christ Himself made the complete surrender, and is the Image of Perfect Love Himself. If we are to keep His Law, we recognize that His precepts must have really the same meaning with His character. Or else, in a sense, He could be said to deny Himself.

Thus, not to take up too much time, if we begin with faith enough, which brings insight, we will see that the First Commandment is not more directed toward preserving the idea of the Divine Unity than it is toward making us *really devout*, that is, devoted to the service of God. To have a God means that we really do nothing without God and the remembrance of Who and What He is, and what His character demands of us, who are made in His Image and Likeness.

And Taking God's Name in vain is not confined to any particular Name which we are accustomed to use for Him, but extends to the whole,

question of reverence about holy things. Many people are desperately irreverent who have invented a new terminology *in order to be irreverent*, and not break, as they think, the third commandment. But you can't be irreverent and not break it. That is what it is meant to prevent. And irreverence is an awful injustice to one's self, because an irreverent man has destroyed his capacity for approaching God. And he has also destroyed in some degree the capacity of those other people whom he has made the hearers of his foolishness.

And a man who never saw a heathen idol, and has not enough mechanical ability to make a graven image, can be an idolater by simply falling in love with things, rather than God, refusing to look up and consecrate the good things, which God has given him, to his heavenly Father. You see this goes very deep.

And the Fourth Commandment goes a good deal deeper than just the Sunday question. The Sunday question can never be settled by itself alone. It involves the whole purpose of industry, the whole business of the responsible care of our time. The man who lives an idle, fruitless life, cannot keep it, though he goes to Church twice every Lord's day. The meaning of this commandment, no less than the second, is consecration. If

there be no consecration, we cannot keep this law. And unless we render responsible account of our whole time, as well as of our Sundays, we have not kept it. There is no selfish answer to this. And until we love to serve God we cannot find the answer. The Love of God changes everything. And note, that the commandment puts a completely unselfish view uppermost: It talks about servants, and strangers, and dumb beasts, as having their right to rest. Depend upon it, that the present organization of manufacturing and commerce needs to be changed before our country can always be sure of a blessing upon her civilization, or uncivilization, just as you please to call it.

In other words, you have really to have a God before you can keep the first table of the law. To have God so that He is more real, important, necessary, than anything else you can think of. Or else, though He is God, he isn't your God, and your religion is just a veneer that will come off when it is scratched.

And so the Fifth Commandment goes into the region of self-sacrificing love for your parents, the Church, the country, the government. It is a virtue which, if anyone is, is its own reward. It certainly makes good days and happy homes, and, without these, what is life?

And the Sixth Commandment is the law of

perfect kindness, meekness, and gentleness; and the Seventh means that you must be pure and clean in thought, word, and deed, that you must remember that the body is given you, not to rule but to be ruled, raised, and sanctified, and to become the temple of the Holy Ghost.

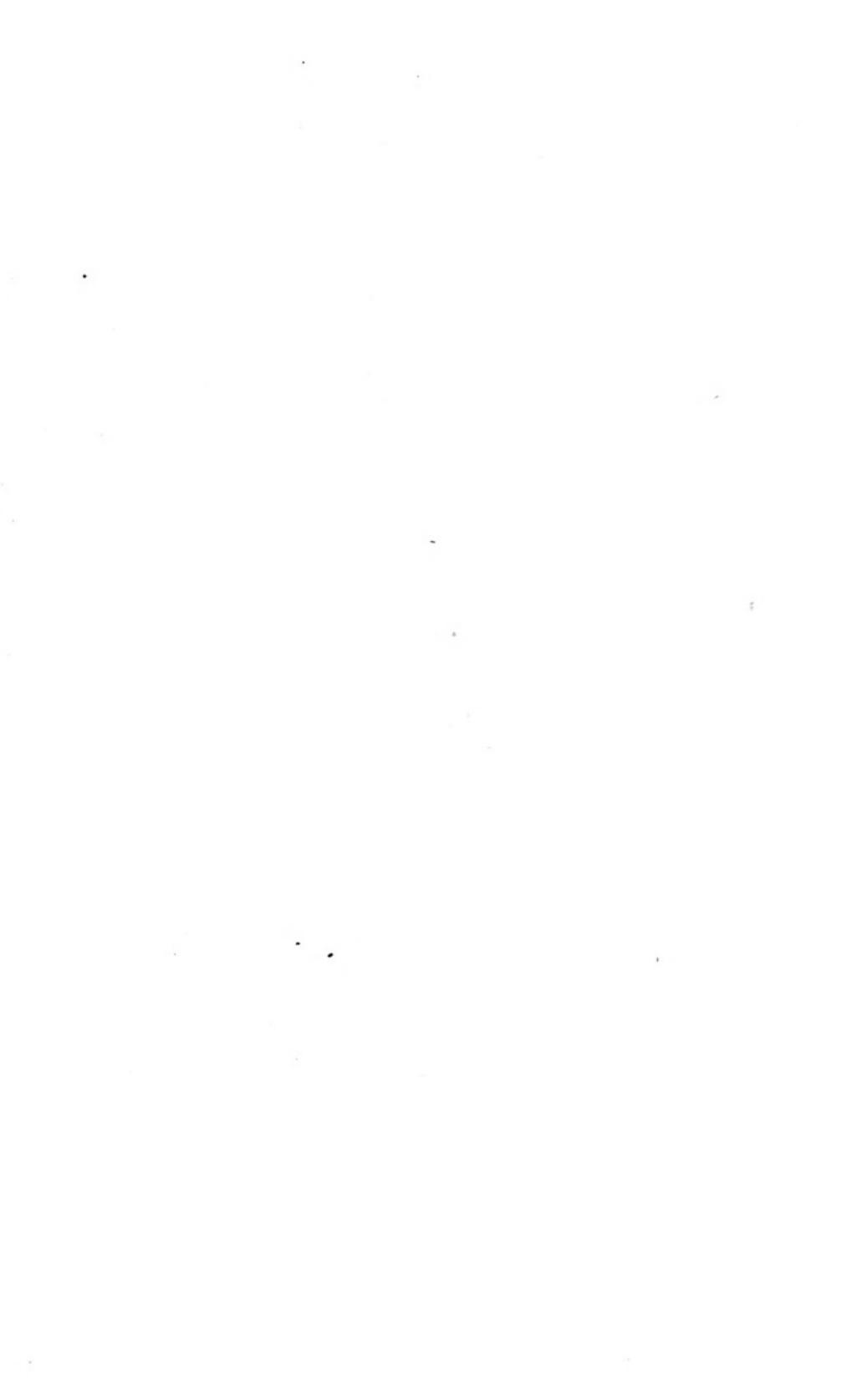
You must not play with unclean things even in your heart, and then think that you can easily raise the heart again to God. You see how large it is. But we say most perhaps by saying least.

And honesty, too, is the law of kindness. So is our view of the Eighth Commandment. The great reason for work is that we may have something to give away. We must be honest, we must tell the truth, because truth and honesty are kind, because we are all brethren, God's children. The Law is not nearly so great as the Reason for the Law. That reason is the Divine love and the Divine kindness.

And so, we see that this is meant to be a kind world, and everyone to have love and blessing in his measure. Covetousness is idolatry, and very debasing; but it is also unkind, and it dwarfs the soul and blinds to the true beauty, goodness, and love, which are already ours.

Take now, slowly, the Duty towards God and the Duty towards your neighbor in the Catechism, and see how fine they are instead of thinking

merely how hard to remember. Fine, they are! There is nothing better for self-examination before Communion. Read the twelfth chapter of Romans, which is another fuller exposition of the Law. And read the Beatitudes. For all the Law is there; or, rather, look at Christ, for He Himself is Righteousness.



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